

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Volume 28 : Number One : Spring 2007

Leader of the Pack

Ignatian Style Leadership

Challenge of Pastoral Leadership

Delivering Hard Words

When Leadership Fails

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FOUNDING EDITOR
JAMES J. GILL, S.J., M.D., a
priest and psychiatrist, died peace-
fully on July 29, 2003, after a
courageous battle with prostate
and bone cancer.

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Letters to the editor and all other correspondence may be sent to:
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, 61 Main Street, Suite 2-S, Old Saybrook, CT 06475.
Phone: (860) 395-4742 / Fax: (860) 395-4769 / E-mail: jesedcntr@aol.com

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HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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Manuscripts are received with the understanding that they have not been previously published and are not currently under consideration elsewhere. Feature articles should be limited to 4,500 words (15 double-spaced pages), with no more than 6 recommended readings; filler items of between 500 and 1,000 words will be considered. All accepted material is subject to editing. When quoting the Bible, the New Revised Version of the Bible is preferred.

Authors are responsible for the completeness and accuracy of proper names in both text and bibliography. Acknowledgments must be given when substantial material is quoted from other publications. Provide author name(s), title of article, title of journal or book, volume number, page(s), month and year, and publisher's permission to use material.

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Editorial Office: HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, 61 Main Street, Suite 2-S, Old Saybrook, CT 06475; phone: (860) 395-4742; fax: (860) 395-4769; e-mail: jesedctr@aol.com

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Editor's Page

THE REVELATION OF DIVINITY

When you receive this issue of HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, we will be nearing the end of the Lenten season or just entering the Easter season. Once again we will have contemplated in the liturgy the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus. I want to reflect with you on the revelation of divinity in these events. In the *Spiritual Exercises* Ignatius of Loyola writes: "Consider how his (Jesus') divinity hides itself; that is, how he could destroy his enemies but does not, and how he allows his most holy humanity to suffer so cruelly" (n. 196). For the suggested contemplations on the resurrection scenes he notes: "Consider how the divinity, which seemed hidden during the Passion, now appears and manifests itself so miraculously in this holy Resurrection, through its true and most holy effects" (n. 223). Is this true? Does the divinity hide in the passion of Jesus and reveal itself in the resurrection? The commonsense answer seems to be yes. Since God is all-powerful, clearly the divinity is hidden in Jesus during the passion.

However, we must say that the divinity is hidden throughout Jesus' earthly existence. Jesus is not partly human, just as he is not partly God. He is both fully divine and fully human. As human he is subject to all the limitations that come with being human; he bleeds; he does not know the future; he is a Jew of the first century, not a Greek, an Ethiopian, or a Roman; his horizons are limited by his culture and upbringing; and he is mortal. So the divinity is hidden in Jesus. There are no moments in his earthly life when his divinity becomes so manifest that no one can doubt that he is God. Only through faith can one "see" the divinity of this human being, Jesus of Nazareth.

Now Ignatius might have agreed with what I just wrote. But he might still say that in the passion the divinity seems more hidden than in the resurrection scenes. I have come to question this conclusion. It seems based on the assumption that divinity is more apparent in power than in powerlessness, in being in

command than in being controlled. I wonder if we have taken seriously enough the clear message of John's gospel that Jesus' "glorification" occurred precisely on the cross. In one of his disputes with the religious leaders Jesus says, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will realize that I am he" (John 8:28). An alternative translation of the last phrase in the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible is: "you will realize that I am." Many scripture scholars believe that Jesus' use of the phrase "I am" in John's gospel refers to God's revelation to Moses at the burning bush: "God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM'" and then added, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'I AM has sent me to you'" (Exodus 3:14). In the passage in John, then, Jesus states that when he is lifted up on the cross, people will know who God is, precisely in him dying so horribly on a Roman cross. In addition, Mark's gospel, which begins with the words "The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mark 1:1), contains the witness of the Roman centurion who says after Jesus had died, "Truly this man was God's Son" (Mark 15:39). Perhaps we should take more seriously that the divinity is revealed in the passion and death of Jesus, not hidden.

If we do take this reading, then we may realize something about God that will shake our conceptions of who God is. We often refer to God as all-powerful, as God almighty. In our liturgies at the end of the preface to the Eucharistic prayer we say or sing, "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might." The idea of God as all-powerful sits deep within us. However, at the crucifixion "God of power and might" is revealed as the vulnerable One, the One who loves us enough to risk a terrible death at our hands and not retaliate. Once we allow this revelation to penetrate our hearts and minds, then perhaps we may get a glimpse of the great risk God takes in creating a universe at all. The creation of the world, we often think, is an act of power; but the crucifixion of Jesus, the Son of God, may help us to

another, and perhaps truer, view of creation. God's creative act may then be seen, not as an act of power, but as an act of loving risk, of creating a world where God's desire, at least as far as human involvement is concerned, cannot be attained without our cooperation. God cannot have our friendship and cooperation without our willingness to accept the offer of friendship and to cooperate with God's intention in creation.

Recently I have been reading *On Christian Theology*, a book of theological essays by Rowan Williams, presently Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury. He makes the point that "creation is not an exercise of divine power, odd though that certainly sounds. Power is exercised by x over y; but creation is not power, because it is not exercised over anything" (p. 68). Creation "is because God wants it so" (p. 69). God, in other words, is the Mystery who wants created reality to be; God does not exercise power over something unruly to make it conform to the divine intent. Everything that exists is because God wants it to be. God does not need to master it; it just is because God wants it. And if, as I have come to believe, God wants human friendship and cooperation, then we may be on safer ground to speak of God's vulnerability than to use the language of power and might.

God's vulnerability in creating this universe becomes most evident in the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth, a first century Jew who, we believe, is the long-awaited Messiah, God's definitive and final answer to the mess human beings have made of our world and our relationships with one another. Again other essays in Archbishop Williams' book have brought this home to me. For example, in an essay on sacraments he writes:

...the passage into the community of those who trust God's faithfulness is effected by God in Christ passing from action into passion; the act of new creation is an act of utter withdrawal. Death is the beginning of the new order, and this divine dispossession points back to questions about the very nature of the creative act itself, as more like renunciation than dominance (p. 216).

More like a renunciation than dominance! In creating God displays vulnerability.

Jesus gives himself over in the Last Supper to the

disciples who will betray, deny and abandon him. As Williams notes, by enacting his passion and death symbolically through the Eucharist Jesus trumps even their betrayal beforehand.

By his surrender "into" the passive forms of food and drink he makes void and powerless the impending betrayal, and, more, makes the betrayers his guests and debtors, making with them the promise of divine fidelity, the covenant that cannot be negated by their unfaithfulness (p. 216).

He goes on to show that Jesus' relinquishing of power in this Last Supper makes those who will betray and abandon him his guests, "recipients of an unfailing divine hospitality." Their betrayal and denial and abandonment do not finally define who they are. Rather, although they take part in the most decisive human rejection of God, they find that Jesus' action in this Eucharist shows them that God's acceptance of them and all human beings has not changed. And this divine acceptance is shown "in the action of the Last Supper, anticipated in a single gesture, the gesture in which Jesus identifies himself with the 'passive' stuff of the material creation" (p. 216). That's how vulnerable God wants to be for us. God is revealed as supremely vulnerable at the Last Supper and at the cross, and that vulnerability is our salvation.

Thus the divinity is not hidden during the passion, but rather is revealed there. At the crucifixion God, in effect, says: "This is who I am. Believe in me, not in your idols. Trust in my fidelity to you no matter what you do." In handing himself over to be betrayed, denied, tortured and killed Jesus shows us who God is, the compassionate One who risks self for our sake. That loving revelation is reenacted every time we celebrate the Eucharist together.

I wish you all a happy Easter season.

Bill Barry, S.J.

William A. Barry, S.J.
Editor-in-Chief

This issue continues the theme of leadership in the church begun in the Winter 2006 issue.

When Religious Leadership Fails:

The Psychology of Administrative Scandals

David B. Couturier, O.F.M. Cap.



When church scandals erupt, it is natural to investigate individual leaders for mismanagement. Immoral, illegal, and inappropriate behavior on the part of religious leaders is intolerable in a community dedicated to self-transcendent values and prophetic witness. We certainly need to understand the processes by which individual leaders fail to take personal responsibility, whether through sin, pathology, personal inadequacy or criminal choice. More elusive, however, are the patterns whereby leaders unconsciously and without apparent coordination support systems of thought and habits of action that allow improper behavior to develop and spread in their communities. Too often analysts are only looking for evidence of conscious intent on the part of individuals. This article looks beyond this to leadership failure as sometimes the result of unconscious social processes in communities, communal dynamics that are below awareness but defensive in nature. Because these are unconscious social dynamics, not personal ones, they often evade public scrutiny through the ordinary means that organizations use to audit their communities. A brief example will orient us.

AN ADMINISTRATIVE SCANDAL

The principal of a Catholic school is accused of harassment of a teacher through suggestive talk. According to established protocols, the pastor of the Church orders an immediate, independent review and eventually receives a recommendation that the harassment did not rise to a level requiring dismissal. He does demand sensitivity training for the offending principal and sets out new procedures in the matter.

Several weeks later, information arrives from other schools indicating that the principal had been involved in such behavior before. What is particularly disturbing is that staff at the present school knew of these allegations at the time of the review but failed to mention any of this information during the independent review process. The media has seized on the story alleging a cover-up and insensitivity to female employees on the part of the Church hierarchy. A further investigation into the failure of staff to offer relevant information to the independent review board and to the pastor indicated hesitancy on the part of individual staff members to becoming the "tipping point" for the principal's possible termination, a fear of "piling on bad news" and a general sense that "others were responsible."

While established protocols helped tease out some information at the beginning of the investigation, emotional screens kept relevant data from leadership and led to the perception of a church administrative scandal. This article teases out the sets of dynamics involved in such cases.

UNCONSCIOUS SOCIAL DYNAMICS

To be complete, a psychology of administrative scandals needs two interlocking sets of tools, one that can adequately describe how individual leaders fail to administer their organizations properly and another that can tell us how organizational anxiety and defenses erupt, even outside individual notice and supervision. We focus here on the latter.

All organizations function in two dimensions and through two sets of conventions. The first is the rational. This is the dimension of policies, procedures, rules and regulations that delineate the values and ideals, as well as the appropriate practices, of the organization. Here roles and rules are codified in (employee) manuals, statutes, constitutions and other official documents. These rational formulae proclaim institutional

mission, organize hierarchy, define objectives and describe the boundaries and public limits of organizational behavior. This is the area most often investigated after a scandal to ascertain whether proper procedures were developed and whether there is a paper trail of improper behavior.

The Two Dimensions of Administrative Scandals

The Rational

Codes
Manuals
Job Performance
Personal Goals

The Non-Rational

Customs
Conventions
Unconscious Expectations
Group Anxiety

But, there is another side to organizations. More rarely analyzed is the non-rational dimension of the institution. It is the area of beliefs, attitudes, emotions and rituals that are more informal and, in that sense, covert to the codifications contained in the official scripts of the institution. Here we find the customs, conventions, informal roles and covert rules played out by all parties at every level of the organization. Here individuals and groups act out "informal" scripts of personal hopes and communal expectations, individual fears and organizational anxieties about the meaning of their work and their place in the formal and informal structures of institutional power and dependency. This other set of rules and roles is rarely written down.

All institutions operate on these two levels. The drama of daily ministry and work is enacted at the intersection of these rational codes and informal scripts, as individuals and teams within the institution try to negotiate the tasks and risks of fulfilling the organization's mission. All organizations, including religious ones, go through cycles of development and disillusionment when pressures, internal and external to the institution, push for change. Individuals and groups within the institution (both formal and informal groups) react to pressures with the repertoire of psychological tools available to them.

ORGANIZATIONAL ANXIETY

Organizational anxiety develops in an institution whenever there is a threat to the ideal or expected

behavior of the group. A healthy institution will recognize and manage this anxiety with an open process of strategic discernment that (a) analyzes emerging changes, (b) tests core assumptions, (c) evaluates options and (d) makes appropriate decisions for the good of the group. Unhealthy institutions, on the other hand, refuse to admit or properly understand the anxiety emerging in the institution and replace discernment with organizational defenses that are meant to protect the status quo. These social defenses, often unconscious to the group, distract the institution from what's really going on, set up new worries to keep subordinates busy about everything, except the core threat to the organization. This is especially true in situations that appear to challenge what researchers call the institution's "primary task" and "primary risk." An institution's "primary task" is its set of core convictions that must be accomplished if a group is to fulfill its institutional purpose. Its "primary risk" is that set of behaviors or attitudes that can uniquely undermine the group's ability to function to purpose.

While organizational "mission statements" should be a clear description of an institution's primary task, experience demonstrates how often those statements veer off into pious platitudes or, in church settings, become condensed versions of the catechism. An institution's primary task is its honest *raison d'être*. It is what the group must be about to be vital and viable. There should be a coherent correspondence between a community's mission statement and its primary task. The community should be acting out its mission in its core convictions and institutional habits. However, that is not always the case. A community can, for example, have a mission statement that proclaims ideals of charitable service and prophetic ministry outside itself, while its primary task has become the maintenance of privileges, the protection of resources and the containment of all threats to the present way of doing things. The primary task, despite the mission statement, has become self-preservation. Canon law and the Constitutions will define the mission of a religious organization, but only an analysis of the formal and informal roles and rules can decide the primary task and risks at play in the institution.

PRIMARY TASKS AND RISKS

Working as an organizational consultant to many congregations and dioceses over the years has given

Social defenses, often unconscious to the group, distract the institution from what's really going on.

me first hand experience with this potential discrepancy between mission and primary task. One community, for example, had a mission statement that stressed hospitality, but its primary task was now isolation and self-protection. Its motherhouse had become a virtual fortress and superiors were elected to protect the illusion that the sisters' comforts could be maintained indefinitely, even without the influx of new members and new ideas.

Another example illustrates the point. A convocation of pastors and bishops recently spoke elegantly of the presbyterate's mission of communion, cooperation and collaboration. The presbyterate was clear about its convictions. However, a review of the priests' behavior demonstrated their shared anxiety over offending their bishop's sensitivity to secrecy, obedience, and fear of bad news. Their mission statement spoke to courage and communion. Their group behavior, on the other hand, resounded with habits of dependency never examined by the group. In fact, the group and its leader were largely ignorant of the inconsistency between their stated mission and what had become their primary task. Because dependency had replaced collaboration as their operative dynamic, both the bishop and his priests were frustrated in their ability to provide a comprehensive pastoral plan in their diocese. The priests honestly believed and valued their commitment to communion and collaboration. However, they had not given themselves permission to engage their commonly held fears and anxieties in public, thus setting up a social and institutional screen between their ideal selves and their actual selves.

ORGANIZATIONAL ASCETICISM

All groups, especially religious ones, need to develop and maintain an organizational asceticism that attends to the discrepancy between the community's

SOCIAL DEFENSES

In times of change and transition, it is at these boundaries that organizational anxiety is transformed into social defenses.

ideal and actual behavior, especially over core convictions. But, for religious groups, this means developing an ecclesiology robust enough to consider not only the community's virtues and vices, but also its unconscious customs and conventions. This is especially threatening since these conventions often house a community's unstated expectations and sometimes its uncomfortable advantages, as well as the community's perceptions (rightly or wrongly) of the leader's privileges and power. Ecclesiology rarely finds a place for these unconscious group dynamics.

Most leaders are well-versed in the rational mechanisms and conscious dynamics of their communities. They know organizational flowcharts, procedures, paper trails and levels of responsibility. Rarely do they advert to the unconscious and non-rational processes that may be impacting institutional behavior. Rarely do they study their organizations below the surface, where defensive behavior becomes codified as "just the way things are done around here." It is there that blind spots and organizational scotoma emerge.

When a community is in a time of significant transition, whether that change is welcomed or not, threats emerge to the conventions and customs of the organization. People have to face the fact that things are changing and roles and rules in the organization may be dramatically different. Transition causes organizational anxiety, even when that transition is only a proposed change.

Anxiety flares up at the boundaries of the institution, at the intersections where one ministry meets another, where one level of responsibility is handed off to another, where one set of tasks needs another set of eyes and ears to get accomplished. Clearly, those intersections are always vulnerable, because they are where personal and corporate issues of power and dependency are acted out. In times of change and transition, it is at these boundaries that organizational anxiety is transformed into social defenses.

There are three sets of social defenses that can erupt. The first is simply **to do nothing**. This is the community that tends to ignore demographics, factor out differences, discount trends and make believe that nothing significant is occurring. Group members conspire with one another, often at the unconscious level, to downplay the significance of what is going on. To avoid disruption to the group's expectations, new trends are simply squeezed into old wineskins. People may look busy, but they are not moving the mission forward because their anxiety remains unaddressed. Individuals and teams who notice the tell-tale signs of inadequacy and who could speak to the anxiety emerging in the institution are unfortunately often scapegoated as not being "team players."

The second social defense is **to get groups fighting**. As difficult as it is to believe, institutions often founder because administrators set up or sustain conflicts between groups to shore up their power or avoid challenges to it. This is an especially effective (and often unconscious) organizational tool used by a leader who is him/herself ambivalent about a proposed or needed change in the system. A leader who believes that an institutional change will unmask his/her weakness in a particular area (or the institution's vulnerability in the larger world) will initiate a fight meant to legitimize the whole process of change. Leaders can be those with formal titles or simply informal status with the group. In any event, staff infighting is set in motion by leaders in the institution who will suggest that resources are too tight or times too delicate to sustain the change. Groups within the organization will unconsciously conspire with this ruse, when their advantage meets the leader's ambivalence.

The final social defense will emerge in an institution's **organizational rituals**. Every system has practices and procedures that help the institution achieve its purpose and fulfill its mission. These rituals are not only functional—to get things done, they are also symbolic—carrying important messages about task, role and authority in the organization.

A group that wishes to defend itself against change, even unconsciously, will create structures and procedures so burdensome and complicated that groups will become paralyzed in their efforts to work harmoniously. Cooperation and collaboration are made so onerous that groups despair of ever finding their way to common

ground. To understand an institution's defensive behavior, one would need to study not only the formal contracts and job descriptions, but also the institution's performance behaviors and organizational rituals, at all levels.

ADMINISTRATIVE SCANDALS AND UNCONSCIOUS NEEDS

As suggested above, an institution's customs will carry people's fears and anxieties about change. The social defenses of a group are the means available to it to contain those anxieties. If, for example, an institution can imagine "barbarians at the gate," it does not have to admit to internal reasons for change. What we are suggesting here is that the roots of administrative scandal are deeper than the dynamics of criminal choice and personal pathology. There is no way of getting around the fact that some people, even religious men and women, will sometimes and tragically engage in criminal and pathological behavior injurious to victims, society and the Church. But, there is another level to administrative scandal. That is the level of the unconscious social dynamic.

Misbehavior can be missed because a group's anxiety is so high that it serves as a screen to the activities going on in the institution. Over time, people do not notice that the organizational rituals meant to serve the group's mission are actually working to protect the group from fulfilling that purpose by muting the need for action and change.

Even highly inappropriate or dangerous behaviors can be missed, precisely because they are so anomalous to the group's identity or purposes. This was learned as a result of the Challenger and Columbia Shuttle Disasters. While these accidents were unforeseen, analysis indicated that the origin of them was patterned and systemic, and not a random or chance occurrence at all.

In a situation where the primary task is the handling of extremely dangerous, even explosive, elements on a daily basis, NASA teams became used to the management of risks and the manipulation of unforeseen and unpredictable anomalies. Because of the nature of their business (scientific exploration and experimentation), the fact of anomalies became routinized and expected. When incidents accrued and experience indicated that the anomalies had not been a threat to institutional safety, managers let down their guard and began to treat these anomalies as routine. This is now called the "normalization of deviancy." The term describes how "flying with flaws" becomes, in a sense, normal and acceptable, within the range of manage-

When incidents accrued and experience indicated that the anomalies had not been a threat to institutional safety, managers let down their guard and began to treat these anomalies as routine. This is now called the "normalization of deviancy."

ment, precisely because these incidents are so rare and history indicates no negative consequences to institutional safety for having done so. But, there are significant problems with this mentality.

Over time, deviancy accumulates and eventually becomes tolerable. These apparently discriminate incidents are like tears in the fabric on the edges of the organization that suddenly and without warning create a huge hole. Managing them at the boundaries only keeps them more elusive and difficult to treat.

Administrative scandals can emerge in church settings when anomalies and inappropriate behaviors find an organizational ritual and institutional routine to contain them. No one need declare these behaviors appropriate, ethical, legal or moral, in order to normalize or routinize their management and administration. We are talking here of unconscious social processes, devoid of ill-will but naive, nonetheless, as to the long-term impact and consequences of such practices.

It is because deviancy and anomalies are rare that they pale in comparison with the grand achievements and spectacular accomplishments of the organization. When, however, they find a niche in the organization's procedures and practices, are dealt with according to protocol and have not yet become a threat to institutional safety, they can become "routine anomalies." Having become routine anomalies in the management of the organization, negative feedback on such matters is unwelcome and deemed inappropriate.

The situation is especially volatile in organizations that have learned how to "repress the negative." These are the groups whose corporate culture is characterized by a need for only positive feedback, optimistic projections, and good news. These institutions project an "avoidance of the blunt negative," sending out the signal

that all news must be good news and all data contradicting present agenda is to be eliminated or recast. Needless to say, none of these dynamics finds its way onto the printed page or public address system. But, they do find their way covertly and informally into the board room and strategy sessions where decisions are made.

BRINGING UNCONSCIOUS FACTORS TO LIGHT

Organizational anxiety develops because members have unrealized expectations and hidden assumptions about their religious community, congregation or diocese that are not being discussed openly. Leaders would do well to audit these expectations and assumptions from time to time.

Israel Galindo names five sets of expectations that leaders of religious communities should monitor: (1) *reciprocity expectations*—what does my community expect of me, others and God, especially during moments of change and crisis? (2) *belief expectations*—what kind or level of unity in beliefs, rituals, or church practice does my group demand, especially during times of transition? (3) *survival expectations*—how safe and secure does my community feel right now and what defenses (especially projection) is my group using to ward off uncomfortable feelings of danger or risk to our group life? (4) *numerical growth expectations*—how does my community measure success and effectiveness and how does it react when there are downturns in vocations, numbers, finances, and other resources? (5) *togetherness expectations*—what are my group's assumptions and expectations regarding intimacy, community, closeness and mutual accountability. Are these expectations reasonable?

Failure to meet these expectations will result in free-floating anxiety in the organization. Eventually and predictably it will come to rest, Galindo reminds us, on the shoulders of one of three groups in the institution: the most responsible (i.e. the leader), the most vulnerable and the most dependent or least able to handle change. When one of these three groups is experiencing increasing levels of stress or blame, it is time to look behind them for unconscious and unrealized expectations.

HOW TO AVOID ADMINISTRATIVE SCANDALS

Clearly, the first way to avoid administrative scandals is to make it absolutely clear to all parties that immoral, illegal and inappropriate behavior is unacceptable and will have swift and sure consequences when discovered. Policies and procedures should be constantly reviewed and monitored and compliance continuously audited. There are no exceptions to excellence at any level of a religious organization.

Secondly, the administration of a religious organization should be guided by a theology of administration. Too often, theological principles of conversion are proposed only for individual behavior. They ignore the organizational systems, practices and procedures that also need the relief and guidance of the Church's economy of salvation. Contemporary management principles are useful only to a point. They were forged largely in the competitive and aggressive world of modern self-sufficiency and litigious self-preservation. The Church can and should provide more. Administrative group audits in a religious organization should pass the

Definition of Terms

Transparency—Mutuality in all things. All the goods, economic activities and ministerial decisions of members are at the service of the whole. There are no hidden schemes by leadership or membership.

Equity—Individuals and communities get what they need and contribute what they have for the common good and building up of communion. Service replaces entitlement.

Participation—Build mechanisms of cooperation and a communion of persons without domination or deprivation.

Solidarity—Those who have more give more to those deprived. All work to undo structures of sin that serve as obstacles to communion.

Austerity—The minimum necessary, not the maximum allowed. Live and work simply, so that others can simply live and work.

same litmus test of virtuous character that attends the practice of individuals. Besides humility, the audit should regularly test for transparency, equity, participation, solidarity and austerity.

Third, organizations must develop what the poet John Keats called “negative capability.”

I mean Negative Capability, that is, when a man (sic) is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact or reason.

These are difficult and troubled times. Leaders need to learn how to take criticism and negative feedback maturely. Subordinates need to be encouraged on how to offer it in an adult fashion. Organizations must learn how to handle institutional paradoxes graciously, staying true to the necessities of tradition and the exigencies of pragmatic institutional politics at the same time. This means teams working through what is called the “*configuration of local paradoxes*.” Embedded in every significant institutional project are paradoxical elements that test ingenuity and imagination: the abstract and the concrete, the head and the heart, the static and the dynamic, decentralized and centralized, excellence and commonality. Favoring one pole over the other often limits critical information.

Unfortunately, we are at a time of increased polarization in the Catholic Church where liberals and conservatives often occupy positions at polar extremes from one another. Concerned with the primacy of “theological positions,” each can sacrifice awareness of the deviancies (and opportunities) falling through the cracks in the great middle of the community. Administrative scandals flourish when polarization keeps the organization’s attention on ideology rather than mission.

CONCLUSION

A psychology of administrative scandal needs two interlocking sets of dynamics: individual and social.

Here we have attempted to describe some of the social processes that feed into the mismanagement of religious institutions. Criminal behavior, personal pathology and individual sin are tragically always a possibility for fallen human beings. But, there are other dynamics that are discoverable and reformable. These are the unconscious social processes that help leaders fail and thus mire organizations in administrative scandals. Attending to a group’s emotional needs, paying attention to their social defenses, auditing their dependency and power relationship to the leader and calibrating their negative capabilities will go a long way in decreasing the number of administrative scandals religious institutions face and in diminishing their awful impact on the church and society.

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Father David B. Couturier, O.F.M. Cap., Ph.D., D. Min., is Dean of the School of Theology at St. Mary's Seminary and University in Baltimore, MD.

LEADER OF THE PACK

George Wilson, S.J.



You've just been elected provincial. Or perhaps you've been appointed president of your school or health-care agency. Or you are an incumbent. Or an office-holder. But that's not enough for you. You are made of more noble stuff. You'd like to become more than that. You want to be a leader. So you go to search the Web for the latest resources on leadership.

You'll find that the volume of books and articles is enormous. Each of them can be of help in its own small way. The trouble is, though, that a lot of them miss the mark because they pay little or no attention to a foundational reality for understanding the nature of leadership. How can that be?

FOCUS ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL GIFTS OF THE OFFICE-HOLDER

Among the numerous treatises on leadership the list of qualities required for a good leader may vary to a greater or less degree, but it's still a set of personal gifts, attitudes, or skills. And usually quite lofty. The adjectives in the Boy or Girl Scouts' code would barely get you in the door: "trustworthy, helps old ladies, etc." More often the list reminds us of the wit of community wags when they see what the criteria developed by members of the province for selection of their next leader: "Jesus Need Not Apply."

But though the list is usually quite utopian, that is not its most significant failing. No, the real lacuna is the lack of any significant reference to *the group that the incumbent is going to lead*. The implied message is that, if you develop this particular set of traits or learn this particular skill-set, you will be—well, a leader. Without qualification. You will be able to lead any kind of group. In such a view the group to be led becomes an afterthought, an interchangeable reality—slide one out, put in another, it doesn't make any difference. The 'leader' has been made into a generic, so why not the community too?

In reality, I suspect that you, my readers, might name any number of situations where it was evident to everyone that a person who had effectively led one organization turned out to be a dismal flop in the effort at leading another.

LEADERSHIP IS A RELATIONAL REALITY

The mistake in so much of the literature lies in viewing leadership as something that resides solely in the psyche of the person who holds an office. In fact, however, the person of the leader is always only one pole of a relationship: necessary for sure, but inherently incomplete. Without the other pole, made up of those who are to be led, the term 'leadership' is meaningless. A relationship is never the result of one party's agency only. Both parties, by their *inter-action*, co-cause the reality.

That does not mean that both parties exert the same kind of influence in the fashioning of the relationship. When a genuine leader-follower relationship is developing, what goes on in the psyche of the leader makes a significant contribution, to be sure. That is the half-truth contained in all those how-to manuals. The self of the incumbent, with all that makes it up, certainly affects the quality of the relationship with the group. The lived biography of the incumbent, with all its successes and scars and struggles, integrated or still bouncing about inside like loose pinballs, informs an identity that can be overlooked only at peril to the group. Edwin Friedman, in his *Generation to Generation*, heightens our awareness of inter-generational patterns and how they shape what the incumbent brings to the relationship. Incumbents are not simply a catalog of desired qualities or skills. Nor are they ciphers. Each one exemplifies the workings of an absolutely unique drama being enacted over time. It is open to constant re-interpretation even as it unfolds relentlessly into a future still being woven. Whether the story has been integrated or

A relationship is never the result of one party's agency only. Both parties, by their *inter-action*, co-cause the reality.

not, the events are real and continue to have an impact on the present.

AND SO TO THE OTHER POLE

Experience shows that a given incumbent may have been accepted as an accomplished leader of one human grouping and then, while possessing exactly the same complex of gifts and limitations, fails miserably in the effort at leading another. It becomes obvious then that if we are to understand leadership we must explore that other reality that co-causes the success or failure of the dance. We need to understand the reality of the body to be led.

One approach to understand the group would surely be to seek out its mission statement, no? After all, that's what they have said they are all about, their reason for existence. What better place to understand the party the incumbent is called to appreciate and dance with? That's the name on the dance card.

Not necessarily. It all depends on what is actually operative beneath the language of a mission statement. At its best a mission statement *may* express genuine aspirations of the group: power-filled desires impelling them to action. On the other hand, it might represent a myriad of other things. It might symbolize what the body thinks it *should* be espousing (aren't religious people *supposed* to be for the poor?). It might reflect what the top brass at a particular moment in the past proposed and the members 'went along with' simply to put an end to the interminable wordsmithing. It may represent the community's way of holding its head up as it looks over its shoulder at what *other* groups in its field are presenting as *their* missions.

In any case, even a statement that represents genuine corporate commitment will never capture the unique identity of the group. That is an essentially singular reality, residing at a whole other level of the collective psyche. That reality has never been seen before

What a prospective leader really needs to learn is how to listen to the signals that express the identity of the group.

and will not be replicated in the future. And it is that group with its presently crystallized-but-still-not-totally-closed identity that this particular office-holder is challenged to lead.

The first thing to be appreciated is that the gathering of persons making up this body is not some generic 'group.' The drama that is playing out is grounded in concrete historical events—apparently long past but still engaging the psyches of the cast. The players, both those actually playing the parts and the Greek chorus in the background, have responded to those events with the particular emotional range available to each. Or perhaps they have merely reacted to them, leaving a residue of unprocessed 'stuff' in the collective craw. The present office-holder, too, is only the latest in a line of incumbents whose pirouettes and pratfalls are often used as a measuring rod for gauging current performance. The group has its own cast of engaging characters: heroes, heroines, villains, and quirky figures, all of whose exploits make the story, in the language of historians, 'thick.'

That psychic material eventually congeals into what can be legitimately called the organization's *culture*. By a mysterious process involving the emotional appropriation of its story (or the lack of one) each group develops its own set of beliefs and codes and patterns of expected behavior. "This is the way we do things (or think things, or feel things) around here."

FREEING AND LIMITING

One of the paradoxes of any culture is that it simultaneously empowers and limits its members. It empowers by giving its adherents a whole menu of pre-formed behavioral options. By my birth into and engagement with my family I have been continually imprinted with ways of seeing and thinking and responding to wide ranges of human experience. All without any apparent effort on my part. I don't really have the burden of choosing fundamental attitudinal responses; they were

the air I breathed, the ocean that held me suspended for years. As embodied spirits we become who we are more by mimesis, by bodily imitation, than by logical reasoning. We live with and we become like.

The other side of the paradox is, of course, that our cultures also limit us. The culture gives us a menu of expected responses—and thereby tells us what is *not* available at this particular deli. Those other folk may wail at funerals but 'our kind' don't behave like that. We eat with forks, not with our fingers. To take an example from the world scene: Iraqi culture finds perfectly acceptable a conversation pattern based on a kind of circumlocution we non-Iraqis would consider 'lying.' Another: I remember well the African Jesuits we studied with in Rome shaking their heads and saying "you mean you guys get sexually aroused at the sight of a woman's breast? You're really weird . . ."

Organizational cultures have usually gelled and been operative long before the selection of the present incumbent. The fact that these cultures are both empowering as well as limiting means that the incumbent's dance-partner will be quite ready, able, and perhaps enthused to see the incumbent propose, say, a two-step. But they stop dead on the dance floor if the call is for a mazurka. To put it more bluntly: there are some initiatives that are simply beyond the present capabilities of the group, no matter what the personal or even organizational gifts of the office-holder. To initiate them, even after an "educational campaign," could lead to a war that might cause the incumbent to seek a different day-job. Some marriages are mismatches from the start. Or, to Texanize the metaphor: some dogs just can't hunt.

So what is an office-holder to do?

THE CONCEPT OF LEADER-GROUP 'DISTANCE'

Every how-to leadership manual worth its salt will tell you that the first requisite of anyone aiming to lead a body is to listen. They might put more emphasis on it: listen, listen, listen. Unfortunately, due to that flaw we noted earlier, what they tell the person to listen to is the voice of each of the individual members of the club. What a prospective leader really needs to learn is how to listen to the signals that express the identity of the *group*. Its accepted behavior patterns, its unconscious biases and projections, its collective strengths, whether named or unacknowledged. The briefest anecdote might go unnoticed by the members (because it has

become their wallpaper) but to a skilled observer of the collective story it could give rise to an “aha!” that discloses great globs of meaning about the group.

And that brings us to the concept of distance. By that I am not referring to emotional detachment on the part of the incumbent, as important as that may be. No, I’m talking here about the distance—the level of consonance or dissonance, if that metaphor helps—between the personal culture of the office-holder and the culture of the group.

The analogy of a game like tennis might help. A tennis court has an appropriate length for that particular game. A football-field size court would be impossible to cover, while a ping-pong table would cramp the use of a racquet and tennis balls. Similarly, the personal culture of the incumbent (his or her world-view, attitudes and approaches to significant features of life) can vary in some respects from that of the group, and both parties might find the variance energizing or even exciting. But if the cultural distance is too great, it’s as if they were at either end of a football field. Neither party can ‘reach’ the other. And yet they are expected to play tennis. The result can be a dialogue of the deaf that no sign language can broker.

A real-life illustration makes the point. A bishop from a large Eastern-seaboard church was appointed ordinary of a small rural Mid-West diocese. In spite of good will and love for the church from all the parties involved, the resulting match was a fiasco. The cultural distance was so great that the poor man could never in a hundred years understand the ways of that people, nor could they stretch far enough to accommodate his. They were good people in a marriage doomed to fail from the outset.

Distance can arise from any number of differences. It might have its roots largely in race (think of some white pastors assigned to African-American parishes). Perhaps in gender (the woman president of a college, who inherits a group of macho middle managers). It could reside in social expectations (the suburban alumna meeting hardscrabble living on the garbage heaps of a barrio). It will usually come to expression in apparently quite tiny bits of daily behavior. Expectations about promptness or going with the flow. Formal address and attire or laid-back informality. Behavior expected (or tolerated) at the faculty picnic.

Some office-holders never catch on to the local speech patterns. Some groups will just never understand, much less endorse, the priority a new incumbent

attaches to things people in their world consider trivial. (For a hilarious story, read *No Left Turns*, the account by a former—and still committed—FBI agent of how the agents out in the trenches neutralized every bureaucratic effort on the part of J. Edgar Hoover to get them to shape up—according to his scale of importance. Poor Hoover never realized he was just hitting the ball against a wall. He thought he was playing tennis, and winning, while his agency was indeed carrying out the mission: in their way.)

WISDOM FROM THE STREET

When it is achieved, the phenomenon of trust freely placed by members of a community in the leadership of one who is just as human and fallible as they are is an awesome human achievement. When successful leadership does take place, we can be sure of several things. (1) It is ultimately not attributable to even the most beautiful theory or method or technique; it was earned, through daily acts of respect on the part of a caring incumbent. (2) That respect was shown, not only to individual persons, but to the special ethos of the collective body: respect for its story, with all the idiosyncrasies that story reveals and the odd set of expectations it has shaped. (3) The one who started out with only the tiny capital of incumbency did not bury that precious treasure but invested it: by being vulnerable and humble enough to apologize after—inevitably—stepping on the partner’s toes. (4) The leader was not focused on ‘shaping them up’ but rather on the work of the leader’s own individuation.

Sounds a bit like love, doesn’t it?

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Father George Wilson, S.J., does human-systems facilitation with Management Design Institute out of Cincinnati, OH. E-mail address: gwilson@choice.net.

The Challenge of Pastoral Leadership: Servant, King, and Prophet



Nick J. Colarelli, Ph.D.

Christ commissioned his followers to “go forth and teach all nations” (Matthew 28:19-20). This is the mission of the Church as it is exercised in the world through its dioceses and parishes. For a given parish, the “nation” that Christ spoke of can be thought of as the entire population of the civic community within its geographical boundaries. If we think of the “Great Commission” in this way, then it is the mission of the parish to reach out to all residents of the area in some fashion. Canon 519 states:

The pastor is the proper shepherd of the parish entrusted to him, exercising pastoral care in the community entrusted to him under the authority of the diocesan bishop in whose ministry of Christ he has been called to share. The pastor is obliged to see to it that the word of God in its entirety is announced to those living in the parish.....he is to make every effort with the aid of the Christian faithful, to bring the gospel message also to those who have ceased practicing their religion or who do not profess the true faith.

For the modern American parish, the “Great Commission” typically represents a significant leadership challenge. For many reasons, especially the shortage of priests, most pastors today are challenged simply to meet the sacramental needs of their immediate congregations. Thinking of all the residents of their geographical

parish as “their flock” is, for most, overwhelming, and for some, alien. Generally, the pastor’s time and energy are taken up with the current needs and activities of the congregation. This circumstance predisposes pastors and parishes to focus on “maintenance” rather than “mission.” This essay discusses the leadership issues confronting pastors in their efforts to be more intentional about “mission.” Clearly, this effort cannot require that the pastor work “longer and harder.” Rather, it requires that he *re-insert himself into his current activities with a different perspective on his leadership and his leadership activities.* The goal of this article is to identify different facets of pastoral leadership and their relationship to the overall task of engaging the people of the parish in “building the kingdom.”

Typically, a parish is “in mission” to at least four distinct groups, each of which has a different disposition toward the gospel and the Church, and each of which has to be approached with a different strategy.

1. The Christian faithful. Here we tend to think of the “hard core” of “acculturated” Catholics in our parishes. These families and/or individuals rarely miss Mass, are present at most parish functions, take advantage of opportunities for faith formation and spiritual development, participate in the social ministries of the parish, support the parish financially in a manner consistent with their economic situation, are honest and fair in their commercial transactions, value a strong family life, take parenting seriously, and seek out the opportunity to socialize with other Catholics.

In their personal lives, they are prayerful; they search for the presence of God in their daily lives; they are respectful of the dignity and sacredness of others; and they attempt to imitate Christ in their conduct with others. When they fail to meet these standards, they are not at peace until they make amends, or are reconciled with others.

Overall they espouse the world-view of the Gospel. They have, to a greater or lesser extent, internalized the commission to teach, sanctify and govern within the communities where they live; and they are willing to share in the responsibility of the pastor to “build the kingdom” within their civic community.

2. Inactive Catholics. Here we tend to think of those who operate on the periphery of parish life. They may be, but usually are not, registered members of the parish. They attend Mass infrequently, or only on major holidays, or not at all. They do not participate in parish activities. They may bring their children for sacramen-

tal preparation or religious education, but do not participate themselves. They are not regular contributors. However, when asked, they will usually identify themselves as Catholics, as having been “raised a Catholic” or as a “former Catholic.” Among this group we find:

- the *alienated*—those who describe themselves as having been hurt, abused, or neglected by the Catholic Church, its clergy, or other church workers. They typically have some anger and resentment toward the Church.
- the *separated*—those who are “separated” from the church because of marriage, divorce, or doctrinal issues. They often feel a sense of loss.
- the *culturally different*—those who do not feel welcome and/or at home in a typical parish because of ethnic, cultural, and/or socioeconomic diversity. They are often concerned about “not being accepted, not fitting in, or not finding other people like themselves” at church and consequently stay away. Often they do have a strong devotional/prayer life.
- the *lax*—those who have no particular complaint with the Church but who have steadily grown weaker in the practice of the faith (or may never have been very strong in the first place). They continue to identify themselves as Catholic, but the faith holds little salience in their lives. The prevailing culture and their life ambitions claim most of their energy. Many young adults find themselves here.

There are no “one-size-fits-all” programs for this group. Each subgroup requires different approaches and strategies, though all require strong outreach efforts to reconnect with them.

3. Other Believers. These are believers (Protestant, Orthodox, and Evangelical Christians; Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, Moslems, etc.) who identify with another faith tradition and practice it with varying degrees of fidelity. Among these groups, attitudes toward Catholics and the Church vary from outright hostility and suspicion to that of interest, respect and mutuality. Since Vatican II the Church’s strategy with other faith traditions has been to seek connection, dialogue, and, where possible, common cause in an atmosphere of mutual respect, and recognition of legitimate differences. The desired result of this strategy is two-pronged: first, that others may have a more accurate and appreciative perception of the Church and its people, and secondly, that we Catholics may have a greater understanding of the differences among the traditions, and that we may be able to develop lasting

and mutually respectful relationships with others. These relationships will enable us to better grow in mutual understanding and in seeking common cause in the service of humanity, while we continue to work, learn, and pray together for unity.

4. Un-churched. These do not identify with any organized or historical faith tradition. The un-churched, for most parishes, represent the largest segment of the population within the parish boundaries. Catholics generally represent 15-25% of the population, and in most localities, the un-churched approximate 50% of the population. They represent a wide spectrum of world views. They may present themselves as simply not interested in religion; as religious, but not comfortable with organized religion; as skeptics or agnostics; or as philosophically opposed to religion.

The church's strategy with the un-churched is similar to that used with non-Catholics. The major effort is to change the image that the un-churched have of Catholics and their Church, and to build positive relationships with them as individuals. To this end, participation in neighborhood and civic organizations and events provides opportunities to meet and demonstrate "what makes Catholics tick." Working with others provides Catholics with the opportunity to influence the values of their civic communities in a manner that is consistent with Gospel values, i.e., that the vulnerable are cared for; that neighborhoods become communities where people know one another and are known; that neighbors care about and for each other; that children are loved, protected, and nourished; that civility and mutual respect is the norm for civic relationships; that commerce is conducted honestly and fairly, and that government and civic institutions are transparent, competent and serve the community well.

LEADERSHIP OF THE PARISH

The call to teach, preach to, and pastor all these groups is an awesome responsibility for all religious leaders, especially in view of the parables of the "sower" and the "good shepherd." The challenge can be overwhelming for the pastor of a parish unless he mobilizes the Catholic faithful to work with him to "teach, sanctify and govern," both individually and communally, in their civic community. He must invite the faithful to become co-responsible with him for "shepherding" this enlarged and diverse flock.

From this perspective, the critical task of pastoral

leadership is to build and sustain a collaborative endeavor within the parish that engages the faithful to grow in holiness as they work together to:

- build effective ecumenical relationships and collaboration.
- build relationships and welcome the un-churched.
- build relationships that support and encourage inactive Catholics to resolve their issues with the church.
- improve the image of the Church and its people within the civic community.

For the pastor and those who share in the responsibility for pastoral leadership, the church has identified three modes or forms of expression of this leadership, *servant, king, and prophet*. These are not distinct styles or approaches to leadership. Rather these are three facets of effective pastoral leadership. All are windows for perceiving and acting on the parochial situation. All are always present, though one or the other may be more prominent depending on the situation. All are necessary and important if we are to accomplish the critical task of building and sustaining the collaborative effort of the faithful "to teach, govern, and sanctify" their community.

The **Servant** facet of pastoral leadership is the impact, the relationship, the connection, which is experienced by the other. The servant is "sent" to heal, to console, to listen, to counsel, to encourage, to invite, to welcome, to empower, to support, to affirm, to minister, to care, to love, to be true to people—in short—to be with people, to be profoundly present. The servant, to serve well, must be free to enter into the life of those served and become deeply connected to them. This freedom to be connected is part of the theology of priestly celibacy.

The **Kingly** facet of pastoral leadership is concerned with stewardship—with managing and directing the resources of the parish to achieve Christ's mission in this time and place. The resources available to the pastor include facilities, money, time, information, connection to the larger Church, and—most importantly—the people of the parish. Engaging, organizing, directing, and administering these resources to prepare and empower the people to "build the kingdom" is the primary focus of "kingly" pastoral leadership.

The **Prophetic** facet of pastoral leadership is concerned with the future of the parish. It reminds us that we, through our collective daily choices, are making our future. Its focus is on patterns and trends in the present day; it projects those into the future; and it evaluates

the implications for the health, wholeness and holiness of all the people and all the groups within the parish. Prophetic leadership is visionary, strategic, corporate, and foundational. It calls us to be Christ's people together in this place now and for the future.

PASTORAL LEADER AS SERVANT

Servant leadership is focused on relationships. Much of the effectiveness of the pastoral enterprise in ministering to people is based upon the building of relationships—relationships that are characterized by shared faith and/or values, trust, respect, openness, mutuality, and collaboration—among the faithful and between the faithful and others living and working within the boundary of the parish. Building relationships requires presence to the other and, for Christians, a specific quality of presence. In Scripture, there are many examples of Christ being powerfully present to others, e.g., the woman caught in adultery, the rich young man, the woman at the well, the apostles, etc. In all of these instances he, through his presence, had a memorable, often life changing impact that led individuals to re-evaluate themselves and their situations from a radically different perspective, and that left them hungering for more.

As Christians we are called to be Christ for others. We are to be the imitators of Christ, the instruments of his peace, of his love, of his truth, (John 13:1-15). As instruments, aspects of Christ are mediated through our person. We, in our presence to others, are called to make some aspect of Christ real and palpable to them. Through our presence others come to experience some aspect of Christ (John 20:19-23). This is the impact that we, as persons, are called to have on those with whom we come in contact. For Catholics this is the core of our call to evangelize. This is even more critical for those in pastoral leadership for they are models for the people.

Our messages about Christ are *communicated* not only through what we say but also through our gestures, tone of voice, stride, facial expressions and our actions. These aspects of ourselves need to be congruent with our words if we are to be effective in communicating Christ and his message to others. It is difficult for others to experience:

- *the love of Christ in our presence* if we are grumpy, impatient, inattentive, aloof, disinterested, dismissive, or inaccessible.

Prophetic leadership is visionary, strategic, corporate, and foundational.

- *the truth of Christ* if it is spoken in a harsh, condemnatory, righteous, overly complex, academic, or confusing manner.
- *the joy of Christ* if the minister is lethargic, speaks in a monotone and has a dour expression.

The servant facet of pastoral leadership enables us to connect deeply with the other, to be with another in love and truth. Without the quality of presence that Christ asks of us, we are the “resounding gong or clashing cymbal” of which St. Paul speaks. If servant leaders do not “walk the walk” with their attitudes, demeanor and behavior, they are not credible, and they will have a diminished impact in their relationships. They will not command attention. They will not lead us to evaluate ourselves from a different moral perspective. They will not lead us to question our attitudes, or our world-view or our actions.

Those in pastoral leadership and all those sharing responsibility for pastoral leadership need to be intentional about continuing to grow in Christian presence. To grow in the ability to help others experience Christ, pastoral leaders need to interiorize him through study, scriptural reflection, prayer, self-examen, spiritual direction, etc. They need to monitor their behavior, reactions, emotions, and motivations for their congruence with those of Christ. Like the rest of us, they need to grow in self-awareness and in the ability to be open to self-knowledge, to understand where they are growing in the “imitation of Christ” and where they are less congruent with Him. Pastoral leaders need to enable others to tell them how their presence is experienced. Scripture tells us to go to our brother or sister when they offend us, but we also need to go to them when we experience them as loving, truthful, trustworthy, accessible, welcoming, inclusive, etc. And, we need to be open to them when they come to us.

PASTORAL LEADER AS KING

Kingly leadership focuses on stewardship of the resources—the gifts—God has placed at the disposal of the parish at this time, in this place. This requires managing and directing the resources of the parish to achieve Christ’s mission. Those in pastoral leadership rarely have all the personal or professional gifts required to exercise their leadership effectively. Even if they should have the gifts, the likelihood is that they will not have the capacity (time, energy, scope, etc.) to do the job that needs to be done. They must rely on resources outside themselves to extend their capacity as well as to complement their personal and professional limitations. The key resources available to the pastoral leader in this capacity are the people of the parish. If they are to grow in holiness, they need to join the leader in carrying out the “Great Commission” within the boundaries of the parish. They need the *communal* opportunity to live out their baptismal call.

Some will be “staff”—individuals who serve with the pastor to provide services for which a specific training and competence are required. Others will be volunteers—parishioners who give their time and talent in the various ministries of the church, or to assist the pastor in the task of administering and governing the parish on councils and committees. Finally all will be “in mission” with their families, in their neighborhoods, their places of work and the community at large. All are called to have a Christ-like impact on those with whom they come in contact.

Organizing, directing, and administering the staff and volunteers, as well as the informational, educational, programmatic, and monetary resources of the parish to prepare and empower the people *corporately* to “build the kingdom” is the primary focus of “kingship” pastoral leadership. Without structure, without clear roles and expectations, without goals and objectives, without systems and processes for planning, communication, implementation, and accountability, the effort to work together and achieve a corporate result becomes too uncertain, too confusing, too wasteful of the time, energy, and zeal of staff and volunteers. They soon lose their motivation and interest. A valuable resource—a gift—has been wasted through poor stewardship.

If, instead, people have a satisfactory experience, if the parish is well organized and stewarded, then staff and volunteers have a sense of achievement. They accomplished an objective. They gained some experi-

ence. They connected to other parishioners or residents in the area. They maintained their interest and motivation, and the resources of the parish have increased. Corporately, there is more motivation, interest, connection, and experience. The “abundance” that God has promised is now manifest.

The key skill of kingly leadership is to expend resources in such a manner as to increase them—to create abundance. This typically means reminding others that people are their greatest resource and the goal is to engage them in a productive, satisfying effort that connects them more deeply and meaningfully to others. From this will flow the resources—energy, talent, time, money, information—required for the next task.

It is important for kingly leadership to maintain the trust of the people. To be trustworthy the leadership needs first, to be *credible*. Credibility requires:

- Clarity of purpose or a vision. What will be done with the resources? What result do we desire?
- Transparency and openness about what, why, and how.
- Willingness to be accountable. Typically this means being willing to come back to the people and report on what has been achieved. What has succeeded? What has failed? What has been learned?
- Recognition that the results that were achieved were made possible by the gifts of the people.
- Affirmation of the act of giving and connecting it to the results achieved will strengthen growth in abundance.

Secondly, leadership needs to be reasonably *effective*. If the youth program has been marginal, and pastoral leaders ask for funds and volunteers to improve it, but do not take the steps required to improve it, then they will be ineffective. If, on the other hand, they secure the proper personnel and programs; if they promote them creatively and aggressively; if they hold staff accountable for their performance; and if they increase the involvement and engagement in the parish by youngsters, then, resources are being used effectively. A desired result, a valued outcome, is accruing to the parish.

With sustained credibility and effectiveness comes *trust*. Parishioners can now trust that their offering will not have been in vain. They experience accrued value in exchange for, or as a result of, their engagement and contribution, and consequently they are willing to continue and/or increase their engagement.

In the absence of credibility and effectiveness, people retreat to, at best, a maintenance level of engaging and contributing. The parish then falls into a vicious

cycle of maintenance level performance, which then breeds maintenance level engagement and contribution, in which only maintenance performance can be afforded. Breaking out of this cycle is difficult and requires courageous, creative, committed leadership that works to earn the trust of all the people—congregants and residents—of the parish.

PASTORAL LEADER AS PROPHET

Prophetic leadership is focused on the “big picture.” It thinks long-term. It connects the dots among societal events and changes ingroup behavior and discerns broad-scale trends. Prophetic leadership learns the “signs of the times.” It searches out others who are knowledgeable about the demographic, cultural, social, religious, economic, educational and technological trends impacting the parish. It attempts to anticipate the future impact of those changes on the society and on the parish. It uses this information to shape and concretize a desired future for the parish.

Prophetic leadership is visionary. It is grounded in a deep Gospel commitment to a different state or condition for the parish. Prophetic leadership is focused on a transformative vision of what could be and should be. It asks for a conversion of world-view, of thinking and habits of thought, of action and patterns of behavior. Prophetic leaders turn to scripture and tradition for the legitimacy of their vision. They steep themselves in prayer and contemplation and “listen” for enlightenment.

Prophetic leadership invites the faithful to enter into the visioning process. They are asked to become co-responsible for discerning a vision for the future and for planning the steps toward that future. Prophetic leaders engage them in pastoral planning as called for by John Paul II in *Novo Millennio Ineunte*.

Prophetic leadership is analytic. It ensures that the factors and trends about parish life are reviewed and studied for opportunities to advance the vision as well as for challenges to it. Further, the gifts as well as the insufficiencies of the parish are identified. It analyzes and compares the current situation to the vision of what ought to be. It looks for gaps—the shortfalls between what is and what should be. It identifies what needs to be transformed or renewed. From this analysis, prophetic leadership identifies the initiatives that can be taken to enable and protect the envisioned future. These initiatives become the foundation for ongoing pastoral planning and engagement of the faithful

Credibility requires consistency of behavior with the core values of the Gospel and the Church.

in “building the kingdom” as envisioned for the parish.

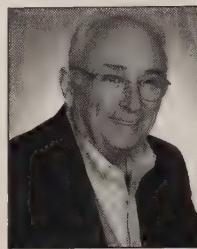
Prophetic leadership calls for change and renewal. It often calls the people to be countercultural. Prophetic pastoral leadership must work hard to be credible if it is not to become a source of contention. If it is to succeed in the face of disharmony, it needs to be persistent and credible. Leaders, to be credible, need to speak to the common good. People need to believe that prophetic leaders care about all the people residing in the parish, about the Church, about the neighborhood, etc., i.e., that they are not acting out of self-aggrandizement, the lust for power, or personal position. Credibility requires consistency of behavior with the core values of the Gospel and the Church. The quality of their presence and stewardship are critical to maintaining credibility. Religious leadership that disvalues persons, lacks compassion, seeks vengeance, lacks honesty and integrity, or is venal, soon loses its credibility.

Transformation and renewal are not easily achieved. They require committed prophetic, kingly, and servant leadership that is exercised in an integrated fashion. Almost every pastoral endeavor involves relationships, resources and future possibilities. In many respects, the Church’s transformation of the Germanic tribes from the fifth through the ninth centuries is an extreme example of the long-term effort of the monastic orders, with consistent administration, allocation of resources, broad-based engagement of people, and the continuing development/formation of all those involved, within a vision of what humanity could be.

While the modern day parish may be able to utilize a shorter “window in which to plan,” the task of transformation and renewal still requires the continuous, multi-faceted pastoral leadership that can be provided by the Church’s dioceses and presbyterates. Pastors cannot be and do everything this essay speaks to, but they can understand and increase their awareness of

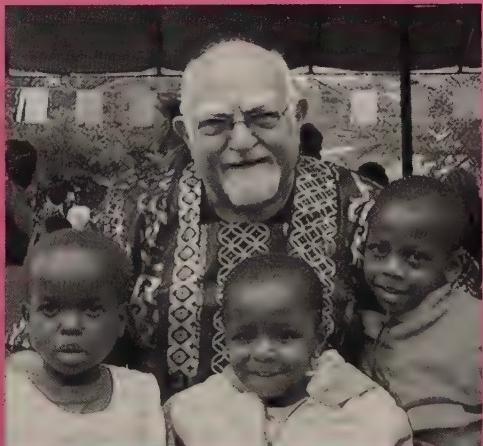
the dimensions and facets of their leadership—*the relationships, the resources, the future possibilities*. They can re-insert themselves into their pastoral situation with new “eyes and ears.” They can learn to see opportunities where once they may have seen problems and burdens. Pastoral leadership that engages and calls the people to be co-responsible with them as servants, stewards and prophets is needed if the people are to grow in holiness, transform their civic communities, and participate in “building the kingdom.” It is through servant-hood that the faithful, and through them others, can know the love and compassion of Christ; it is

through kingly stewardship that they may know the justice of Christ; and it is through prophetic leadership that they may know the hope of Christ.



Nick Colarelli, Ph.D., is a retired psychologist volunteering with the Diocese of Colorado Springs where he assists in pastoral planning for the diocese and a pastoral leadership program for priests.

IN MEMORIAM: REVEREND ANGELO D'AGOSTINO, S.J., M.D.



On November 20, 2006, HUMAN DEVELOPMENT lost a great friend. We are not alone in our loss. Angelo D'Agostino, S.J., was a dynamo of energy who lived to the full the Jesuit ideal of “helping souls.” Born of immigrant parents in Providence, Rhode Island, D'Ag, as he was known by one and all, grew up to become a Tufts University-trained medical doctor and surgeon who entered the Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus in 1955 and was ordained in 1966. He became one of the first priest psychoanalysts in the United States. When Jim Gill thought of starting HUMAN DEVELOPMENT D'Ag gave his wholehearted support and encouragement, becoming the first Senior Editor.

After some years of clinical work in Washington, D.C. D'Ag felt a call to help the people of Africa. In Nairobi, Kenya, he founded Nyumbani (“home” in Kiswahili), a home for orphans with HIV. It was a first for Africa, and 96 orphans now reside there. D'Ag's work for the orphans of Nairobi brought him into contact with many famous people. At his funeral both the President of Kenya, Mwai Kibaki, and his wife, Lucy, spoke. Her Excellency Lucy Kibaki told the story of meeting President Bush at a party in Washington who offered to introduce her to Father D'Agostino whom he saw across the room. She told President Bush that she had already visited D'Ag's home many times.

D'Ag met a lot of famous people, but his heart was with his family at “home,” Nyumbani. D'Ag was 80 years old when he died in Nairobi from a heart attack suffered while undergoing emergency surgery. His funeral Mass was attended by thousands of people including about 70 priests and five archbishops and bishops. May this great man and dear friend rest in peace.

Bringing Peace to the World - One Relationship at a Time

Terri Sortor and Ed Gaffney

Tom sat at the dining room table staring at the photograph in his hand. In the picture he was eleven years old; it was about a year after his dad had died in a car accident. His older brother, Bill, stood close to him with his arm carelessly thrown over Tom's shoulders; he was about sixteen at the time. Bill had tried to fill the void left by their dad's absence, suddenly taking an interest in all of the things that Tom and his dad had liked to do together: hunting, fishing, golfing, and scouting. Up to that point, Bill couldn't be bothered; he had his own friends and his own interests. At times, Tom resented Bill for trying to fill their father's shoes, but most of the time he enjoyed his brother's friendship. It seemed that Bill was always close by when Tom needed him most: when he was being bullied at school, when he couldn't make heads or tails out of his math assignments, when he needed advice about how to talk to girls, and

especially when he was cut from the high school baseball team. He relied on Bill for his strength and for knowing what to do next. So why had he let this argument go on so long? He could barely remember what it was that started it, but he remembered the feelings he had about Bill butting into his life, as if he were still a teenager! Well he wasn't, he remembered thinking, he was a successful businessman and could make his own decisions, thank you very much. His wife, Marjorie, said he was being pigheaded and that Bill only wanted to help, but each of them got stubborn, spoke to one another less and less, and then stopped talking altogether. That was four years ago. Tom wanted to go back in time and change things, but knew he couldn't. He was stuck—and didn't know what to do next.

He wondered if the upcoming Making Peace Mission at his parish would have any answers for him, although he really doubted it. He wasn't

a “holy roller” and didn’t talk about his faith except when he went to Confession. Fr. Kevin had urged him to approach Bill about their stalemate, but he didn’t know how. After listening to Marjorie and Fr. Kevin, Tom decided that he had little to lose by going to the mission on Catholic conciliation; if nothing else, he’d get two people off his back!

The reasons for Tom’s attendance at our mission and the attitudes he carries into it aren’t unusual. Often we are faced with a situation that we cannot resolve and are looking for answers. Tom’s pessimism about getting any answers isn’t surprising either, since each of us thinks that the conflicts we get embroiled in are unique.

Have you ever been involved in a conflict—either in your personal or professional life—which you were at a loss as to how to handle? Even those of us in church ministry must deal with conflicts in our jobs. People do not check their sin condition at the door when they come to work for the church. One of the most common refrains we hear as we intervene in church conflicts is, “I thought people would behave differently here; I thought it would be better than my job in the business world.”

There is no place that is free of conflict this side of heaven, since there is no place free of human weakness. Our challenge as leaders is to change our understanding of conflict as well as our response to it. In this way, we can use it as a means to “renew the temporal order and make it increasingly more perfect (for) such is God’s design for the world.” (Vatican II, *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*, #7) This call to renew the world is not limited to the laity, of course; it is shared by every person of good will, ordained and lay alike, dedicated to making manifest the Kingdom of God in this world.

Tom’s situation and others like it play out day after day. How can it be that otherwise intelligent, competent, and compassionate people manage to get so crosswise in their personal relationships? We have seen successful men and women as well as clergy and other church ministers become completely paralyzed when faced with conflict in their personal and professional lives.

More than simply a nuisance, unresolved interpersonal conflict contributes to family and workplace unrest and sometimes even to illness and death. “Where two or more are gathered, there also is conflict!” Short



of living alone on a deserted island, we can’t escape interpersonal conflict in our lives, so we need to look at it differently—and help others to do so as well.

Most people’s reaction to the word “conflict” is negative. Words often associated with it are anger, hurt feelings, fight, tension, alienation, friction, argument, and disagreement. If you are thinking, “Well, conflict gives people an opportunity to ‘clear the air’ and actually can be a benefit in a relationship,” you have likely moved from an automatic, emotional reaction into an intellectual response. What you are thinking is correct, of course; but it does not tend to be our initial, emotional reaction to conflict.

We define conflict as “a difference in opinion or purpose that frustrates someone’s goals or desires” (Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker*, p. 24). There are many instances in which we may disagree with others without a conflict developing. As soon as another’s position frustrates us in achieving a goal or desire, however, watch out!

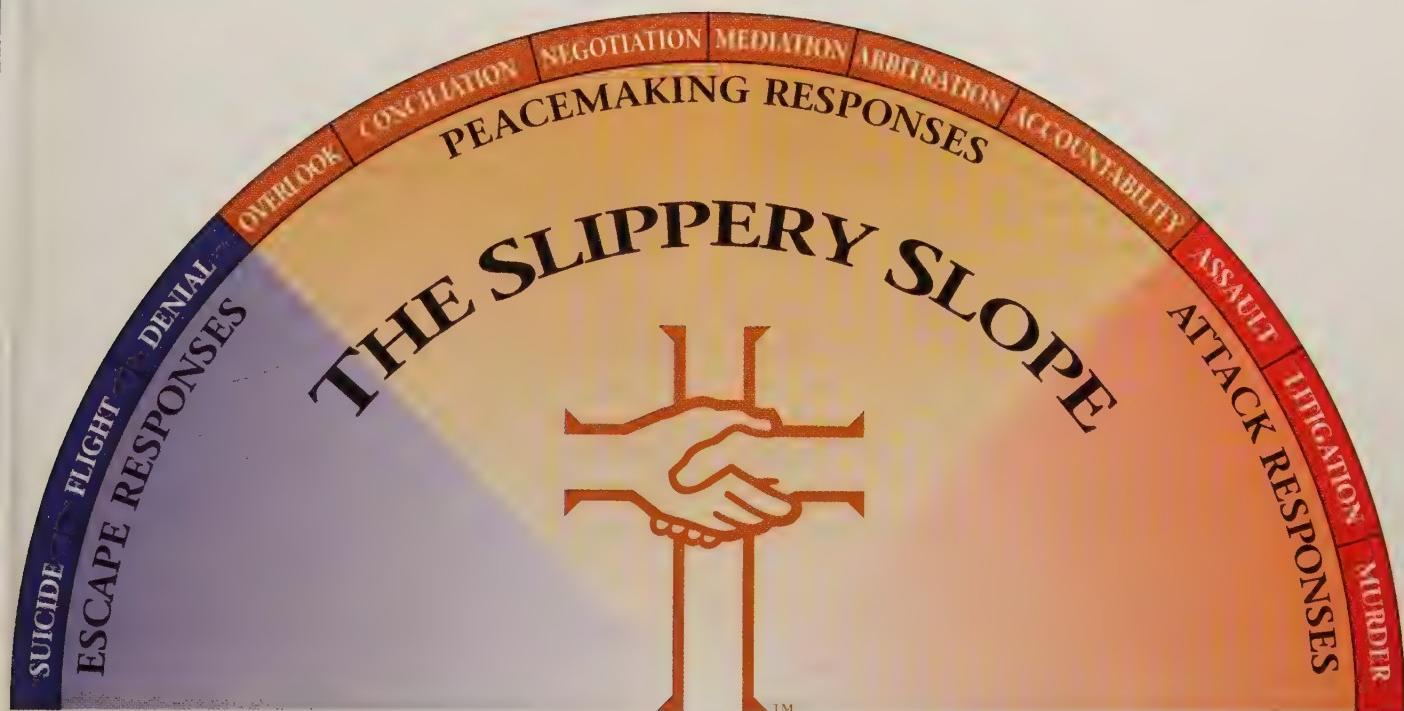
RESPONSES TO CONFLICT

Are you aware of your own personal reaction to conflict? The classic “fight or flight” choice may be a good place to start as you reflect on this. Are you the type of person who will go to any lengths to “keep the peace?” Do you find yourself doing all you can to avoid someone with whom you have a disagreement? Have you changed where or when you go in your workplace or parish in order to minimize contact with someone? If so, you are exhibiting the traits of those who seek to escape from conflict. On the other hand, if you welcome the fight and tend to become aggressive and argumentative, you may be on the opposite end of the

scale. Look at the diagram below to see what we mean. (It may be helpful to keep in mind a recent or current conflict in which you can consider your thoughts, feelings, actions, and reactions as you read.)

ately. These responses are peace-breaking.

Scripture tells us that there are ways of dealing with conflict that are life-giving and allow us the opportunity to put our faith into action. The fact that



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On the left side of this diagram, you can see the escape responses: denial, flight, and its most extreme, suicide. Pretending that there is no problem or avoiding people or situations in order to steer clear of the issue simply prolongs the conflict and does not bring you closer to resolution. Quite simply, it is peace-faking: trying to convince yourself and others that all is well. On the other side of the illustration are the attack responses: assault, litigation, and murder. Firmly planting yourself in your position, and reacting with aggression, whether verbal or physical, only escalates the problem and puts us further from any hope of reconciliation. While it may be our culture's quickest response to conflict and disagreement, taking your adversary to court is often an unsatisfying experience, even for the prevailing party. It is expensive, time-consuming, and does not address the relational division between the parties; in fact, it often cements a division permanently. While murder seems very extreme and is usually not the response that many of us would consider, we certainly can "murder" someone's reputation through gossip and back-biting, whether done unintentionally or deliber-

we are striving to live as God-centered people should permeate every aspect of our daily lives, including this area of conflict. In fact, there is no better opportunity to witness to our call to holiness than in this area. Think of how others might react if they saw us responding to conflict in a way that honors God and ultimately brings grace into the situation. Perhaps the words of St. Paul would apply if this were the case, "So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come." (2 Corinthians 5:17).

So, living differently because of our faith calls us to respond differently to conflict as well. The peace-making responses in the center of the slope are divided into two categories: personal and assisted peacemaking efforts. In other words, there are actions that we can undertake on our own and those that require the assistance of others. For instance, can we simply overlook an offense that is not relationship-breaking and give the other person the benefit of the doubt? (Note that this is different from denial, which attempts to convince us that there is no problem. Overlooking

acknowledges the problem, but says that it need not break our relationship.) Can we attempt to talk over the matter with the other person in the spirit of Matthew 18:15-20, approaching him or her in humility, understanding that working to heal our relationships is pleasing to God? Matthew outlines three steps to resolving conflict with another: the two parties meet one-on-one to discuss the matter, they discuss the matter with one or two others present, or they discuss the matter with the whole church. Perhaps negotiating substantive matters such as time, money, property, or other limited resources will bring about a resolution. While not necessarily easy to do, these steps are simple and are outlined repeatedly in scripture. If we apply ourselves earnestly—that is prayerfully and in good faith—to these three steps, our relationship may be restored without taking further conciliatory steps.

Sometimes, however, a relationship is so damaged or people are so staunchly rooted in their own position and are unable to hear the position of another, that the assistance of a mutually respected third party is needed. The conflict work that we do most often, in addition to our proactive three-night parish mission, is Catholic faith-based mediation. In these situations, the mediators meet with the parties in conflict and through the use of prayer, scripture, education, conflict coaching, and facilitated sessions, help the parties to restore the relationship as well as settle any substantive issues. The mediators are not decision-makers; they are neutral as far as the conflict issues, and strive to facilitate the parties' developing an agreement that will be satisfactory to both as well as pleasing to God. It is in the best interest of the parties to resolve their conflict before or during the mediation phase, where they have the most control of the outcome.

For a variety of reasons, even mediation does not bring about a satisfactory resolution in every case. In this situation, arbitration should be employed, where the agreed-upon arbitrator meets with the parties, who have signed an arbitration agreement, and announces a decision that specifically resolves the conflict and defines the behaviors of the parties going into the future. The decision of the arbitrator is legally binding.

The final step in the peacemaking section of the slope is accountability. Few people realize that Church leaders in the past used to be much more involved in settling disputes among the faithful; in fact, many of the Canons of the Church were developed to assist leaders in that area. Accountability, then, reflects the

measures used to ensure that the parties remain faithful to the agreements that they made. These measures should also reflect the care and concern that the Church has for the well-being of those in conflict.

Regardless of the cause of the conflict, scripture is clear about the position we should take. Matthew 5:23-24 doesn't leave anything to speculation:

Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

Does God desire that our relationships with others be peaceful and life giving? Absolutely. Does God know that our worship can be negatively impacted if we prolong or promote unresolved conflict in a relationship? Yes. Has God left us on our own to figure out how to go about resolving conflict? Not at all. New and Old Testament stories offer us a complete roadmap for how to deal with interpersonal conflict.

THE FOUR GS

There are four simple (but not easy) steps, called the Four Gs, that can be applied in every dispute or conflict in which we find ourselves. We believe that leaders need to be able to live these steps out in their lives as witnesses to their faith.

Glorify God

The first step invites us to remember who we are as sons and daughters of God. It reminds us of the journey toward holiness, to which we are called. The first



of the four steps, then, is *Glorify God*. This means that we first take time to pray about our situation, asking God how we should respond. Might there be a lesson for us to learn if we suspend our natural, human reaction to the conflict and prayerfully seek God's will? Are there ways in which we can honor and glorify God through our responses to the conflict? Is it possible that we could begin to view conflict as an opportunity, rather than a burden? Imagine how our world would be different if just we Christians stopped to pray as an intentional first step in dealing with conflict. It has been said that ten times the number of people who we think are observing us are actually seeing us and what we do. What a witness we would be if our walls of defensiveness and stubbornness were replaced with attitudes of humility and prayer. Once, while Ed was a passenger in a car driven by one of the religious priests assigned to our diocese, they were cut off by an aggressive and reckless driver. Before Ed could utter the angry reaction that had formed immediately in his mind, this priest murmured, "God bless him and protect him and all others on the road today." Ed has admitted to being more than a little chagrined and humbled by that gracious witness of God's love in action.

Tom chuckled to himself as the first night of the mission ended with the discussion of the first G in the process, "Well, they promised a different approach to responding to conflict, and praying is certainly a much different response than I've ever had to a fight!" Still, it wasn't completely unexpected, Tom thought; after all, this is a parish mission, and it is being held in a church.... It will be interesting to see what the other Gs in the process are—and if they bear any resemblance to real life.

When the second evening of the mission began with a review of the highlights of the previous night, Tom was able to re-focus on the reflections he had about approaching conflict in a different way. He found himself more open to hearing what was being said than he was at the beginning of the first night. He knew that the second G would be the topic tonight, and began to think that perhaps there was a better way to handle conflict, after all.

Get the Log Out of Our Own Eye

Once we've stopped to ask God to open our minds and hearts, it's time to *Get the Log Out of our Own Eye*. This second G in the four-step process challenges us to



take responsibility for how we have contributed to the situation. Even if we did not actively engage in behavior that started the problem, we have usually played a role in it. Might we have hardened our hearts against the other? Have we gossiped or lobbied others to take our side in the dispute? Have we written off this relationship as unimportant? Have we refused to listen to the other's perspective? Have we demonized the other because of things that were said and done? Jesus taught that we should not judge others and expose the speck in their eyes, but rather first look at the log in our own. Remembering that the measure with which we measure will be measured out to us should stop us dead in our tracks when we start to point a judgmental finger at another.

There are three distinct types of logs that we can identify: our attitudes, our sinful words and actions, and our sins of omission. Our attitudes should be formed by dwelling upon these words of Paul,

Finally...whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things (Philippians 4:8).

You get the point. We have to work hard to counteract our society's attitudes of self-importance, arrogance, and pride to embrace those of our God of love, mercy, and forgiveness. Further, sometimes our sin condition causes us to choose harsh, angry words against others, to lie and be deceptive, to engage in un-Christ like behaviors, and to avoid doing the right thing when we know better. This second G then is a true examination of conscience: where have I put my will above God's will? Where have I fallen short of God's desires for me in this dispute?

If this step hasn't been humbling, perhaps you need to pray through it again to get in touch with your contribution to the conflict. It will help you to see yourself and your role as God does. During a retreat a woman religious shared a story about when she first knew what sin was. As a small child she was rewarded for her good behavior by getting a quarter to buy candy

for herself. At the cash register, an elderly couple in front of her was being asked to remove some items from their order, since they were seventeen cents short. The sister told the retreatants, "As I stood clutching my money and candy, I knew in my heart what God wanted me to do. And deep within me, I said, 'No.' That was the first time in my life that I really knew what sin was."

Once we have done the hard work of naming our own fault, what do we do with this information? How can it be useful toward healing a broken relationship?

Has anyone ever spoken to you in an accusatory tone, perhaps implying some fault in your behavior? How did that make you feel? We are all familiar with feelings of defensiveness, when we doggedly seek to protect ourselves and move the spotlight from our faults to another's. Perhaps we withdraw into ourselves so that their criticisms will not hurt or condemn us. Sometimes we refuse to accept any fault and stubbornly argue that our position is completely correct and that we are totally blameless. And so we react and escalate and counterattack and eventually get nowhere. Thankfully, there is another way to approach others with whom we have conflict.

As the second night ended, Tom was feeling very tired; it had been emotionally draining to reflect on his own conduct as he thought about the conflicts he had been through in his life. At first, he realized he was rationalizing and arguing with himself as the speakers talked, and he was very selective about what he shared in the small group discussions. But as the evening went on, he began to sense a softening in his heart. He listened to others share their struggles with family and work conflicts; they seemed to be genuinely searching for a better way to handle them—and his argument with Bill kept intruding, unbidden and unwelcome, into his mind. He could echo another participant's comment, "I think I know why God has brought me here." Now Tom was actually looking forward to the third night of the mission.

Gently Restore

The third G, *Gently Restore*, is inspired by the words of St. Paul, "...even if a person is caught in some

transgression, you who are spiritual should correct that one in a gentle spirit..." (Galatians 6:1). What better way to gently restore a relationship than to come from



a position of humility rather than one of superiority? There is nothing more humble than openly and honestly acknowledging to someone how you have hurt them or how you reacted to the hurt you felt by their actions. This means we expose our vulnerability, which is the very place that defensiveness seeks to protect. To make this even more challenging, there is no guarantee how it will be received or that the information will not be used to hurt us again. God asks us to take this risk for the sake of the relationship and our faith witness. God is frankly not interested in our pride or how often we are right, but rather in how we have striven to heal our relationships. One spiritual leader put it this way, "I think, on my personal day of judgment, I would rather hear Jesus say, 'You forgave too much,' rather than, 'You judged too much.'"

This would be an impossible step without the grace of prayer. Prayer helps us to access divine wisdom without which we are more likely to seek self-interest. Our prayer can help us choose our words carefully, to assume the best of the other person, and to speak only to build him or her up. It also can help us to recognize that there may be other obstacles like illness or fatigue that can prevent final resolution at this time. God only asks that we try.

Recently Terri shared an experience when a co-worker criticized her behavior at work,

I immediately became aware of a nuclear internal reaction, and my mind raced with thoughts of 'but you don't

have all the facts' and 'why is this any of your business anyway?' I said nothing, however, and simply glowered at him. Afterward I sat in prayer for a few minutes and realized that my reaction was based on the fact that some of the criticism was true and that I did not like being exposed. I had a choice: I could ignore his comments and avoid him, I could act hurt and manipulate the situation until he felt as bad as I did, or I could take the bold step of discussing the matter further with him. I decided to be bold. So I went to him and said, 'When you came to me with your observation earlier today,' I said, 'I did not receive what you had to say very well. The truth is, you might be right, and I have to spend more time thinking and praying about it so I can take your words to heart.' There was a bit of a stunned silence at first, but he thanked me for coming back to talk with him. He acknowledged that his choice of words was hurtful and apologized for his superior tone, saying that it had come out without his first thinking it through. By this honest and humble interaction we were able to clear the air and restore—even strengthen—our relationship. He also got the message that I will receive what he has to say to me, and that he does not have to resort to negative humor, innuendo, or other tactics to get my attention. I will respect him and listen to him. I don't need to tell you how this situation would have turned out if I had allowed my self-righteous and sinful humanity to guide my response.

Go and Be Reconciled

Once we have prayed and worked our way through the first three Gs, we are ready for the fourth G, which is *Go and Be Reconciled*. Tenuous truces or temporary "cease fires" are not enough. It is God's desire that we do all we can to be truly reconciled with one another.

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion,

kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do (Colossians 3:12-13).

The challenge becomes: how to put behind us any barrier or grudge and to grow and celebrate our relationship; in other words, truly to forgive from the heart. But before we can do this, we must

first understand what forgiveness is—and what it is not. There are many misconceptions that prevent us from moving forward in healing and restoring relationships broken by conflict (Sande, pp. 186-7). Forgiveness is often misunderstood and improperly applied.

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT FORGIVENESS

For example, some think that they must feel forgiveness before it can be extended. Just as love is a choice, not a feeling, so is forgiveness.

Are we not always doing things we do not feel like doing? Wouldn't we rather stay in bed some mornings and make an excuse not to go to the office? Because we have a commitment to those we love, though, we get up, get dressed and go. Parents certainly would not choose to stand in the cold

and drizzle to watch their umpteenth high school soccer game, but because they love and support their children, they wouldn't miss it for the world. We learn to rise above our feelings every day. One definition of maturity is acting in spite of our feelings rather than because of them. Therefore, we forgive even if we do not feel like forgiving simply because God has forgiven us first.

Another common misconception is that we must be able to forget before we can truly forgive. The cliché, "forgive and forget," reflects this mistaken understanding of forgiveness. We have all heard the adage, "Hurt me once, shame on you, but hurt me twice, shame on me." This is a perfect example of a culture that is locked into carrying grudges and feeding resentment. In truth



we are not likely simply to forget our experiences; but just because we can remember them does not mean we have to be controlled by them. It has been said that "Christians forgive to forget" and that it is God's grace once we have decided to forgive that moves us toward forgetfulness.

Yet another misconception is the belief that forgiving someone excuses the wrong that they have done; this cannot be further from the truth. Forgiveness acknowledges the hurt rather than simply excusing it. In some cases restitution may be necessary. For example, if a neighbor's window has been broken by an errant baseball, the window will need to be fixed. In other cases there may be consequences to face, even after forgiveness has been granted. For instance, with God's grace I can forgive infidelity in a relationship, but I may choose to extend trust only in stages to the offending party. And forgiving a person who has treated us abusively or violently does not mean that we should continue to put ourselves in harm's way by simply resuming the relationship in the same manner as before.

A final misconception is that we must withhold forgiveness because there is no guarantee that it will not happen again. Yet we fail in our resolve to change our behavior more often than we succeed. St. Paul said it best, "What I do, I do not understand. For I do not do what I want, but I do what I hate" (Romans 7:15). How many of us have had to forgive someone more than once for the same offense? More importantly, how many of us have needed to be forgiven more than once for the same offense? Jesus knew this human failing all too well when he instructed his disciples: "Then Peter approaching asked him, 'Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him? As many as seven times?' Jesus answered, 'I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times'" (Matthew 18:21-22). Jesus is saying that we are to forgive each other with the same generosity that he extends to us every day.

DEFINING FORGIVENESS

Now that we have considered what forgiveness is not, it might be helpful to look at what forgiveness is. When we ask people in our mission sessions to articulate a definition of forgiveness, we hear a wide variety of responses. One person explained forgiveness as, "letting the other person back into your heart." Another said, "freeing another as well as yourself from feelings of anger, hatred, and revenge." Still another

said, "giving up all hope and resentment of having a better past." When we forgive, we are imitating the mercy of God. Remember, when we pray the "Our Father," we ask God to "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." So, we are asking God to forgive us in the same way that we forgive others! This realization should spur us on to greater determination to develop a spirituality of forgiveness as we respond to conflict in our lives.

It is important, however, not to forgive prematurely. In fact, we ask people not to forgive another until they can make four specific promises to the other. The first is, "I will not dwell upon this incident." Since we cannot control every thought that enters our mind, this promise assures the other that we will not spend any more time re-hashing the conflict and the hurt; we will not conjure up the pain and anger associated with the dispute and dwell on it. The second promise is, "I will not bring up this incident again and use it against you." It has been said that some people get *hysterical* in conflict while others get *historical*. You know, the folks who dredge up every offense of the other party since the beginning of time. This promise tells the other that this inventory of past offenses will not be a part of any future discussions. The third promise is, "I will not talk to others about this incident." At times, when we are embroiled in a conflict, we might seek the wisdom of someone whom we respect who will counsel us on how to heal the relationship. This is not what the third promise prohibits. The third promise prohibits us from gossiping about the conflict; we will not try to gain allies or speak in any way that will put the other in a bad light. Finally, the fourth promise is, "I will not allow this incident to stand between us or hinder our personal relationship." This promise expresses a willingness to strive to heal the relationship, moving beyond the hurt and trying to trust anew. If these promises are kept, we remain open to the healing grace of God in the conflict (Sande, pp 189-190).

Those in the medical and therapeutic fields tell us that it is unhealthy for us to hold grudges and resentments against others. As someone once said, "Unforgiveness is the poison we drink hoping the other person will die."

Tom sat silently as the third night of the mission ended with a growing sense of clarity and purpose in his heart. The phrase, "ambassadors of Christ" resounded in his head. His

brother, Bill, had been on his mind and in his heart throughout the mission; at times, it seemed the mission facilitators knew the personal story of his family conflict and seemed to be speaking directly to him. He wasn't focused on Bill's behaviors in their argument anymore. That didn't seem so important. Instead, he thought of Bill's sincerity, not his sin; his generosity, not his jealousy; his faithfulness, not his folly. And he thought of the depth of his own sin that had caused such pain in their families. As Tom knelt and bowed his head, he removed his cell phone from its case and turned it on. Later, when he left God's house, he would start to get his own house in order, as well.

As leaders in business, in the Church, in our recreational and community organizations, and in our families, we have limitless opportunities to model our faith and the belief that God desires peace in our hearts and lives. True leadership always calls us to what we believe. In the area of conflict, the words of Hebrews 12:14 should be our touchstone: "Strive for peace with everyone, and for that holiness without which no one will see the Lord." In this way God's mercy will heal the wounds in our own hearts, restore the relationships that have been damaged by sin and provide others with a way to live out their faith in the everyday struggles of life.

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RECOMMENDED READING

Gaffney, E. and T. Sortor. "Conciliation: Transforming Conflict Through Faith." *The Parish Management Handbook*. C. E. Zech, ed. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2003.

Sande, K. *The Peacemaker*, 3rd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004.



Terri Sortor, Human Resource Manager for the Diocese of Colorado Springs, directs typical human resource functions and has a particular passion for employee relations and assisting those in conflict to achieve reconciliation.



Ed Gaffney, Director of Pastoral Services for the Diocese of Colorado Springs, has been an educator, staff development specialist, business owner, missionary, and executive coach.

Forgiveness: *The Challenge and the Pain*

An Interview with Bishop Gregory M. Aymond, D.D.



The interview with Bishop Gregory M. Aymond, bishop of the Diocese of Austin, and one of the newest members of the Advisory Board of HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, took place in September 2006 in Austin, Texas. It was conducted by Brother Loughlan Sofield, S.T.

HD: We understand that you recently traveled throughout your diocese to give a presentation, *Forgiveness: The Challenge and the Pain*, in twelve different parishes. What motivated you to do this?

Aymond: There were two reasons. First, in individual families there is, at times, the challenge to forgive and to experience reconciliation. At the same time within the family of the church, on both the parish and diocesan level, we sometimes find a lack of forgiveness, many broken relationships and hurt feelings from things that people did or didn't do, said or didn't say. Just reading my mail, I realize how people are hurting one another, sometimes knowingly and sometimes unknowingly. As a diocesan staff we asked ourselves what we could do to help people to experience healing.

I am convinced that fostering healing and forgiveness should be a major focus of the church. It's evident to me that in our society

and, even in our church, revenge is much more prevalent than forgiveness. I dare say that if there is one thing that characterizes our generation, it is impatience and revenge.

The second motivation was the realization that in the Catholic church we have the wonderful gift of the compassion, healing and mercy of God in the sacrament of penance. From various conversations, particularly with priests at our presbyteral council, we identified that there is a need for a revitalization and deeper appreciation of the sacrament of penance. So, we decided to dedicate a year first to call people to human forgiveness and secondly to help the members of our diocese come to a deeper appreciation and understanding of the sacrament of penance, realizing how it calls us to accept God's forgiveness, and motivates and challenges us to forgive others and to accept forgiveness ourselves.

HD: What has been the response to the presentations you gave?

Aymond: The response has come in a variety of ways. I had some immediate feedback from people after the talks. However, what is amazing are the letters and phone calls that I have received often weeks or months later. The feedback has been heart-wrenching and emotional. Individuals have recounted painful stories of hurt and of how they are experiencing a desire both to forgive and to be forgiven by others.

One young man talked about feeling betrayed and disowned by his father and of his inability to forgive his father. He also recounted other situations that had happened to other members of his family that were even more painful. I was profoundly touched as I listened to him describe how he went before the Lord to grapple with that. It's a miracle that a person, having been hurt so deeply, and having experienced the hurt of so many other people in the family, would honestly say, "I want to go before God and give in to the messiness of this business of forgiveness. I want to lean on the Lord and acknowledge that I know that God is calling me to forgiveness." To me that is life changing. And, certainly, hearing these stories has affected and encouraged my own spirituality.

HD: Could you say something about this issue of forgiveness and how it relates to your spirituality?

Aymond: I believe in the forgiveness of Jesus. I want to be a person of forgiveness. I think that I live that out sometimes and that at other times I do not,

and I struggle with that. As I've come to reflect on this topic and as I've come to say all these truthful and wonderful things about forgiveness, I realize that I'm still challenged in my personal life and spirituality to be more forgiving and to take the initiative of forgiveness and mercy as Jesus did. I'm still learning to forgive and be forgiven by God, by others, and even by myself. I believe that I am a student in this school of forgiveness, and I do look to my teacher, Jesus, who shows me the way and strengthens me in the midst of those challenging times and messy moments to let go of uneasiness, fear and revenge and to move into the realm of forgiveness, which is always turbulent waters.

HD: You talk about Jesus being your model. Have there been other models who have influenced your attitude toward forgiveness?

Aymond: There have been some but I guess I must also painfully admit that in my life I have not seen many people who have embraced the beatitude, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." I can look back within my family, among teachers and some seminary people with whom I've lived and worked, and I certainly can identify some people who have influenced me in a positive way.

But I also live out of the conviction that we don't have enough models of mercy, forgiveness and compassion in our world today. We have many models of revenge, of holding grudges, of nursing wounds and feeling sorry for ourselves but not as many models of forgiveness. Just recently on *60 Minutes* I listened rather attentively to an NFL football player say that any success that he has accomplished has been the result of spending the week prior to the game hating the other team and learning to be filled with rage. You can sugarcoat or interpret that in many different ways for the world of football. But, if that is what our society teaches people and these are the people we call heroes, what does that say about society?

HD: I understand that after you presented this at twelve parishes in the diocese you then went to some of the universities to meet with young people. Could you say a little bit about how that evolved and what that experience was like and what you learned from it?

Aymond: Yes, three of the state universities and one Baptist university in the Diocese of Austin invited me to give the presentation and dialog with their students. I thoroughly enjoyed visiting our university campuses.

We're never too old or too young to try to be true students of forgiveness.

Those who say that the young people in our church are not involved in religion and don't love the Catholic faith have not experienced what I've experienced because I find, not just a quality of faith, but large numbers of our young people who are involved in campus ministry, who are hungering for God, hungering for the church, hungering for a deeper relationship with God and with other people. I've been very much impressed.

The other day at one of our universities, they arranged for twenty-eight young people to have dinner with me before the presentation. We just talked about the church and what they thought we could do, as a church, to reach out to those who have been hurt by the church, those who felt that they had a need to forgive the church for something that they believed had happened in their lives. I was touched by their sensitivity and by their willingness to want to help us to reach out. I've been impressed by our young adults. It has not been uncommon at these talks for one or more of these young people to come with tears in their eyes saying, "Because of some of the things I've done in my life, I never thought that God could forgive me. Now I have hope." "Because of some of the things that happened in my life I never thought that I could forgive my parents or a relative or a friend, or a girlfriend or a boyfriend. I know now that I have to enter into the realm of mercy and forgiveness." I find our young people, our young adults, open and sincere, being challenged by the Gospel message and, certainly, they have encouraged me in delving deeper into all the aspects of forgiveness. It's a question for everyone, children, young adults, adults, and senior citizens. We're never too old or too young to try to be true students of forgiveness.

Another strong sign of faith among our young adults is evidenced in the fact that over fifty recent graduates from Texas A&M University are now enrolled in seminaries or novitiates of religious communities for women or men.

HD: It sounds like the experience has given you a sense of hope.

Aymond: The experience with our young people and talking about forgiveness throughout the diocese has done three things for me. First, it has given me hope because I see people living the Gospel message. I see people wanting to embrace what God is calling them to be, people of forgiveness and reconciliation. Second, it has also challenged me to be more forgiving. You can't keep preaching about forgiveness without realizing that for each of us there are one or more people in our lives whom we have to forgive more fully. Forgiveness is a long process. Third, it has challenged me to pray for those who have not forgiven me. Certainly, in my role as a religious leader and as a bishop I make decisions that are rooted in prayer and in faith; sometimes they please people, and sometimes they don't. I get letters telling me how wrong I am and how much a person cannot forgive me. It has made me think about forgiving others but also about praying for those who don't forgive me. An interesting example was last year when our Annual Appeal went out to over a hundred thousand households. One lady wrote back that she would not give to this campaign because she didn't believe that the bishop made the right decision in the assignment of a certain priest. The Stewardship Office gave me the note, and so I wrote to her and told her, "I know that we disagree. I know that you feel dislike toward me, but I offer my hand in forgiveness and reconciliation. I hope that we can experience reconciliation in this life. But if not in this life, maybe we'll meet in the Kingdom of God, in heaven, and maybe we'll be able to be reconciled then." I must admit that while I thought about her and prayed for her a couple of times, she then went off of my radar screen of prayer. Eight months later I received a letter from her that said, "Dear Bishop, I forgive you." And she signed her name. I thought to myself, "Thank you, God." That is what forgiveness is about. That is what the Gospel message is about. Whether we've been hurt or whether we've hurt someone else, it's always Jesus who takes the initiative, and we must then follow up by being a forgiving and merciful person.

HD: As I listen to you, it sounds as though you're describing a first step in a process. There are two questions. What do you hope will happen in the Austin diocese, and what have you learned through this process that might be helpful to other dioceses and parishes?

Aymond: My hope is that, first, we will genuinely be united in prayer with those whom we are still seeking to forgive. Second, that we will let go of our desire for revenge and our hard feelings. Third, that we will also pray for those who have not forgiven us.

I often have this crazy vision. Wouldn't it be interesting if we really lived out what Jesus advises in Matthew 18:15-20, when there is a disagreement between two people? They are supposed to work it out together. If not, they are to involve a third person. If there is still no resolution with a mediator or a reconciler, then they bring it to the church.

In the church and in the world today that's not the way it goes. Wouldn't it be interesting if we literally lived out the Gospel, the command of Jesus to follow the three-step process and went to the person directly instead of going to their boss or going to the bishop or going to the pastor? We could go to the person and in a very civil way say, "You have hurt me." If that didn't work, we could take the next step and bring the conflict to another person, and then bring it to the community.

The amount of litigation in our country is a clear indication of a lack of forgiveness. The talk shows are a clear indication of the lack of forgiveness: the person who can revile the other person and besmear their reputation and make them feel belittled is the one who gets the loudest applause. So, we are not a generation of healing and forgiveness and reconciliation but one of revenge. Wouldn't it be interesting if we went to the person in a spirit of prayer and humility and said, "There's something not right between us? How can we learn to be united in the Spirit of God?"

HD: Can you identify any practical ways by which we can become more of what you are describing, countercultural and Gospel-oriented in both dioceses and parishes?

Aymond: I think so. I think one way would be if we could get parents to start talking to their children at a very early age about forgiveness and how it's not healthy spiritually, physically or emotionally to hold a grudge.

Secondly, we have this practice in the diocese now: if a group of people want to meet to complain about a priest, I will only do so with the priest being present. If they want to talk to other people on the staff and share their concerns with them, that's fine, but I will not meet with them without official representatives from the parish and the priest present. Otherwise, we create unhealthy triangles and dysfunctionality that are not faithful to the Gospel.

We could go to the person and in a very civil way say, "You have hurt me."

On the parish level, it's not uncommon to find conflict, because whenever we are gathered together there will be many opinions and disagreements, and we should expect that. But when people get hurt on a parish level, it is easy to sugarcoat it and not deal with it. However, the priest, the deacon, the religious and the lay leaders need to be able to call people together and say, "Let's sit at the table and talk. Let's share our differences." I think that in our society and church today we tend not to address the issues, to not look at the elephant in the middle of the room. We avoid naming the hurt.

Can we, instead, come together to ask God's enlightenment and to address these issues to bring us to forgiveness and reconciliation? My experience has been that some parish staffs, school faculties and religious education catechists don't get along and don't model forgiveness, or what it means to deal with tension, or what it means to be able to disagree in a civil way and still to respect and work with the others. Wouldn't it be a miracle if we could get our staffs and our faculties to model the more mature, Christian kind of behavior and spirituality for our young people and for all our parishioners?

HD: There was a unique insight in your presentation in which you related anger, bitterness, and cynicism with their opposite, compassion. Could you say a little about that?

Aymond: We have all met people who are cynical and bitter about everything. They believe that the whole world is falling apart, and they're just angry about everything and everyone. There was a time in my life when I not only tried to avoid those people, but I was very, very judgmental of them. One day I realized that people who are cynical, bitter, and unhappy are trying to protect themselves. It's rooted in the fact that they have not forgiven themselves or someone else, or they

There is an intimate, unique experience of the forgiving Christ in the sacrament of penance.

have not accepted God's forgiveness, or they have not believed that God has forgiven them. So, I'm much more compassionate, though not perfectly so. I'm still a student in the school of forgiveness, but I'm much more compassionate and understanding toward those people.

HD: In the very beginning of this interview you mentioned the sacrament of penance. Could I ask you to say more about that?

Aymond: The sacrament of penance, better known to us as confession, is sometimes also called the sacrament of reconciliation. It is my conviction that it is often not understood and, certainly, not appreciated by many of our Catholics, as well as by people of other faiths and denominations. How many times do we hear people ask why they can't just go to God in prayer and ask for forgiveness and get it? Certainly, one can.

At the same time we take seriously that Jesus really meant what he said when he told the apostles that they had to carry on the ministry of forgiveness and healing as he did. He said, "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them" (John 20:23). Jesus is empowering the apostles to go out and to represent his forgiveness and mercy, as well as to bring about reconciliation within the community of faith. Anything that you and I do that is "not of God" not only affects our relationship with God but also fractures our relationship with the community. We affect the community of faith.

Jesus in his wisdom sent the apostles not only to forgive and give mercy in the name of God or to carry on the healing ministry of Jesus, but also to reconcile us to one another and to restore the fullness of our relationship with the church, the community of faith, the Body of Christ, living today.

Many times you hear people say it's hard to go to confession. I don't know of anyone who says, "Hurray, hurray, I get to tell another human being about all my faults." However, as Catholics we have the opportunity to do this to someone, the priest, who is not a judge, but

a healer. His words to us should be words of healing and encouragement and forgiveness. Jesus is as present to us in the sacrament of penance as he was to that woman who was condemned because of her adultery in the ninth chapter of John's gospel. Jesus embraced her with compassion and mercy. He's as present to us as he was to her. He's as present to us as he was to Zacheus and the other sinners who came to him and asked for mercy. There is an intimate, unique experience of the forgiving Christ in the sacrament of penance.

Many people say, "Well, I don't go because it's uncomfortable." Others say, "I don't go because I don't know the Act of Contrition or because I haven't been in a long time or I can't do this or I can't do that." I think that we need to see the sacrament of penance in a different way. The sacrament of penance is, as much as possible, an informal conversation between the priest, who represents Christ and his church, and the penitent. It is a conversation about our need for God's mercy and our need to be reconciled with the church. This sacrament provides the opportunity to give to the Lord our weakness and hear a word of forgiveness and love. It is similar to going to a doctor. We ask the doctor to help us, not only to deal with the pain, but to find the root problem of our illness. Is that not also true in confession? We give a list of sins, which is important, but the real question is, "What is the common denominator in all these things that I bring to confession? What is it in my heart that allowed me to say these things? What is it in my heart that allowed me to do these actions or not to do something, not to care for others?" That's the root of the sin, and the penance should help us to discover a remedy, to heal that part of our heart that is wounded and needs healing.

HD: I've been struck by the number of times you used the words healing and forgiveness. I noticed a quilt hanging here in the chancery with those two words emblazoned in the middle. I know that Pope John Paul II in his pastoral letter, *Jesus the Redeemer*, identified those same two qualities as the gestures that are characteristic of Jesus in the scriptures. Is there a story behind that quilt?

Aymond: That quilt was made by a number of women in one of our parishes. They heard that we were going throughout the diocese to make it a year of healing, forgiveness and reconciliation. They came together and had the idea that they would do "a blanket of mercy." This quilt, which has the words healing and

Forgiveness in the center, together with a number of pictures and symbols, tells the story of how God has forgiven us, how we are called to forgive as we have been forgiven, and also how forgiveness is a struggle, a challenge and is messy. The quilt portrays the story of mercy. When they gave it to me as a gift, we decided to call it "a blanket of mercy." We hope that it not only embraces each and every person in the parishes, but our whole diocese as well.

HD: Based on your experience of this year of mercy and forgiveness what recommendations would you make to pastoral leaders?

Aymond: The recommendations I would make are: First, read the scriptures more attentively and discover in them the Jesus who always takes the first step toward reconciliation and healing. Second, ask what can we do with our families, our parish, school and diocesan staffs, and our religious communities to live out the Gospel of healing and forgiveness more fully. How can we, as leaders, model forgiveness for people who have very few models of mercy? They have many more models of revenge or of holding a grudge. Third, speak more frequently with one another about the sacrament of penance. Provide more instruction on the beauty of this sacrament, and you will see a growing appreciation of the great gift that we have. Finally, make the sacrament more available. If we did make the sacrament more available, I believe we would see a rise in the number of people who are more open to accepting the mercy and love of God and the reconciliation of their church.

HD: Just before we began you mentioned one of your convictions about forgiveness and what it should mean to bishops, especially.

Aymond: All of us are called to be people of forgiveness. Those of us who have been called to faith leadership in the church are called not only to live that Gospel in our daily lives, but also to be a strong, consistent and prophetic voice that does not allow a lack of forgiveness to go unchallenged. We must always strive to call people to the integrity of the Gospel. Sometimes we may be tempted to think it can't happen. Well, apparently it happened for Jesus, who is the one that we are supposed to follow. Jesus looked at the man next to him on the cross and said, "This day you will be with me in paradise." He looked down on the people who were crucifying him and said, "Father, forgive

All of us are called to be people of forgiveness.

them, for they do not know what they are doing." That is challenging. That does, at times, seem foreign to our experience, but that's because Jesus is our teacher and we are his students.

HD: In your talk you mentioned the five dimensions of forgiveness and the five steps of forgiveness. Would you share those?

Aymond: The five dimensions of forgiveness are: First, a willingness to forgive those who have hurt us. Forgiveness is completed when we say, "I am hurt. I feel offended and either I'm willing to try to forgive, to start the process of forgiveness, or I am willing to forgive and to let it go." Either one of those is defined as forgiveness, whether we start the process or actually are able to totally let it go.

The second dimension is to accept the apology of another. We've all had times when someone has said "Maybe I'll forgive you sometime, but not now." Each of us can pray for the grace to accept the apology of others.

The third dimension is that sometimes we believe in our minds that God has forgiven us, but we don't feel it in our hearts. Can we go to God and say, "I don't feel your forgiveness. My faith tells me that you've forgiven me but I can't feel it. Could you help me with that?"

Fourth, sometimes we don't forgive ourselves. I know of people who have said, "I know this was too great for God to forgive me, but more importantly I can't forgive myself." Those two things of forgiving self and accepting the forgiveness of God are usually tied together. Many times when we say God hasn't forgiven us, what we're really saying is, "I haven't forgiven myself. I can't believe that I did this and I can't believe that I can let this go."

The last dimension is forgiving God. Sometimes people believe we are heretical when we talk about forgiving God. God doesn't do anything wrong. That's true. But aren't there times in our daily lives, in our family or work or in community, where we do what we

think is loving toward a person, and it's misunderstood or not accepted and so we hold a grudge against them? Sometimes we do the same thing with God. God gives us what we need to grow and to be the people that he has called us to be, but sometimes we don't understand or we misinterpret what God is doing, and we get angry with God. Sometimes we hold a grudge against God. Can we get to the point of being able to let that go and be reconciled with God?

Those are the five dimensions of forgiveness. There are also five steps of forgiveness. The first is to experience the pain. When someone hurts you, you feel pain. We could pretend that we've not been hurt, or we can face the reality and say, "I really have been hurt, and I need to deal with the fact that my heart is broken, or that I have a deep hole or pit in the midst of my stomach. I feel hurt because that person has done something, or not done something, or betrayed me." So, first is just to acknowledge the pain.

Second is to be able to say to myself that I have been hurt by this specific person because of their actions or words or failures, and to be very specific about why I am feeling the pain.

Third is to be honest with our feelings. For most of us, somewhere in the process of being hurt we feel a sense of revenge, a desire to get even with the other because he or she has hurt us. The feeling of revenge, in itself, is not sinful. It certainly becomes sinful when we put these feelings of revenge into action. The feelings of revenge are a way of protecting ourselves. It's a way of saying, "I will not let this happen to me again." We must learn to accept those "unacceptable feelings" when we are involved in a hurtful situation.

The fourth step is to invite God into the mess. We pray, "This is not resolved, and I don't know how it will be. I'm feeling torn by this, but, God, I invite you into the mess."

Fifth is to make a conscious decision to forgive. If

I'm not at that point, then at least acknowledge that I want to forgive and realize that with God's help I will finally reach the point where I can begin walking the path toward mercy, forgiveness and reconciliation.

HD: When you met with the people in the diocese, you left them with some very interesting and challenging questions. Are there any questions you would like to offer to our readers?

Aymond: Am I willing to pray for those who have hurt me? We all have a little list, conscious or unconscious, written or unwritten. Don't presume that forgiving is forgetting. We're intelligent human beings. We're not going to forget people who have hurt us by their actions or their words. But, can I pray for those who have hurt me and ask God's blessings upon them? That takes honesty, humility, and integrity. Out of that prayer comes the living out of the message of Christ and the Gospel.

HD: You recently co-authored a book. Is there anything you want to say about the book?

Aymond: What motivated me to help author that book was my conviction that the world as well as our church needs reflections on forgiveness and on reconciliation. I hope that by helping people to examine God's mercy and the mercy that we are to show one another, it might motivate each of us to become more forgiving. We have been forgiven; therefore, we must forgive.

HD: Thank you for sharing your reflections on this most important topic with our readers.

RECOMMENDED READING

Juliano, C., L. Sofield and G. Aymond. *Facing Forgiveness: A Catholic's Guide to Letting Go of Anger and Welcoming Reconciliation*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2007 (April).

Solidarity

James Torrens, S.J.

DOWN TIME

Here in a place that draws blood
we sit waiting to be called.

The lab has a fanciful name,
"Quest," as if for rare metals.

The receptionist bellows,
"Aviles, we need a specimen."

Each countenance stays deadpan,
the ruddiness drained from faces.

She cries out again: "Dacanay,
did you eat breakfast?" A faint "No."

A long silence ensues,
the unsung patience of patients!

History is in the seamed faces,
worry is in the young smooth ones.

The second hand whirs on and on,
and we draw closer and closer.

and hours were at stake. Theirs was the long-stifled voice of a people daring to express itself under a stern Communism. This irresistible impulse, growing into a national movement, called itself "Solidaritet."

Something equally brave took place in Chile during the dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet (1973-1990). With an iron hand, the Chilean military enforced its overthrow of the Socialist government by torturing and executing thousands. The Catholic Church, the one slightly independent force in the country, reacted on behalf of the victims. Cardinal Raul Silva Henriquez, a man as unflinching as Pinochet, opened an office in the Santiago archdiocese called the Vicariat for Solidarity. Its task was to keep a detailed record of all abuses and disappearances that people dared to report. The archdiocese did this with an eye, not just to preservation of memory, but to the day of reckoning when specifics and proofs would be sought and some vindication could come to the victims.

In the United States, an indelible experience of solidarity marked the participants in the civil rights era. In the last few years, solidarity has come into play for Jesuit students and faculty outside the School of the Americas (SOA, now awkwardly renamed the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation) in Columbus, Georgia. There, in late November, the Ignatian Family Teach-in takes place as part of a much larger gathering, the "Vigil to Close the SOA," that aspires to close this training center for Latin American military forces. The Teach-in is linked to the protest, but it aims more deeply, to inculcate some sense that God is calling us all to be a people bonded in common cause.

We all live in the "Me" era, the Age of Entitlement, where solidarity is countercultural. Yet its draw is still tremendous. Those participating in World Youth Days in Denver, Paris, Toronto and Cologne have felt the impact lastingly. So have the marchers to Washington and other nerve centers in defense of the right to life. Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, the Jesuit General Superior, said some-

Ideologies, movements, climates of opinion all create a special language that is meant to have a ringing effect. "Solidarity" is one such term in currency in our time. We find it in the phrase "solidarity with the poor," which has a definite rhetorical load, claiming more perhaps than can ever be realized, but which also has a resonance and depth that merit attention.

In the late 1970s and 1980s, television brought the rest of the world to the Gdansk shipyards in Poland, where Lech Walesa and his fellow dockworkers were leading the protest and strike that eventually shook all of Eastern Europe. Much more than wages

thing apropos of this topic, that solidarity is a contact, not a concept. It is not donations to the poor that creates solidarity. That effect depends rather on what Pope John XXIII called *convivenza*, living with them, rubbing elbows, partaking of whatever bread they have. If this happens, then, as the theologian Jon Sobrino puts it, "the poor will save us."

"Solidarity!" is not just a rallying cry but a spur to brotherly and sisterly conduct. It is all about kinship. As children of God we have a shared identity drawing us to one another. "Kinship," says Father Greg Boyle, after years of living in a gang-prone area of Los Angeles, "is louder than solidarity." Father Boyle says of his own life, "I don't work with the poor, I share my life with them." People in all kinds of movements can "Brother" and "Sister" one another to death, but still have a hard time breaking out of exclusivity.

Human solidarity in an era of clashing cultures and civilizations can seem to be such a pipe dream. But our earthly survival depends on it, and we have many chances to experience it. In accidents and emergencies, how often there is intense fellow-feeling that can even issue in heroism. Being together in the face of grave danger, we are told, knits many servicemen and women together tightly. It is what, according to Shakespeare, King Henry V appealed to in his famous speech before the battle of Agincourt: "We few, we happy few, we band

of brothers" (*Henry V*, IV, iii, 60). Ordinary times, too, can sharpen our awareness of common humanity—being stuck together on a bus that breaks down or in an airport where flights are all backed up; being witnesses of some amazing event, like a musical performance of genius.

What the poem "Down Time" talks about—a medical setting where separate individuals sit in silence, sunk in their own anxieties—can seem the very opposite of solidarity. But things can happen there that wake us up to one another—funny things, odd things or just plain all-too-human things. At such a place and time, our college degree or our lack of one, our authority in the world or our lack of it, our gender, race, religion, etc., count for nothing. We are just all there together, not in control, not out of control, but simply as children of God. This is what brings solidarity out of the realm of clamorous movements and installs it where it has to begin, in the interchanges of every day.



Father James Torrens, S.J., is associate director at the Cardinal Manning House of Prayer for Priests, a place of retreats and spiritual direction, in Los Angeles, California.

Bearer of Bad News: The Ministry of Delivering Hard Words

Paul D. Holland, S.J.

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Pastors and preachers rejoice that they are called to the ministry of being evangelists: heralds, announcers of good news. In truth, however, they sometimes must be “kak-angelists,” messengers of bad news, uncomfortable or disconcerting words. The same burden falls upon doctors (“the diagnosis is cancer”); grown children with elderly parents (“dad, it’s time to surrender the driver’s license”); “mom, you need to move to a nursing home”); employers and supervisors (“your performance is unacceptable, you’re fired”). In reality, almost all of us will bear this responsibility repeatedly in our many adult relationships as parents, spouses, colleagues, mentors, and friends.

Popular culture has modeled many ways of delivering bad news, most of them destructive of the recipient, or the bearer, or both. Government spokespersons hide bad news in obfuscation and euphemism (“the bombing caused collateral damage”); judges may deliver the verdict with devastating delight (“You are the weakest link. Good-bye.”). And even those who try to avoid such dishonest and destructive tactics can nonetheless seek self-protection behind trite and demeaning phrases (“Hey, don’t shoot the messenger.”)

Like the poor, the necessity of bearing bad news will always be

Scripture itself suggests the wisdom of it (Matt 18:16). The point is to keep the conversation on the impact of behaviors rather than on personality conflicts.

Ask Christ to hold the individual during the hearing of the bad news and afterwards.

with us. It need not, however, be merely an onerous duty, laden with traps and temptations to hurt others or protect ourselves. Instead, under grace, it can become a genuine expression of ministry for both the one who announces it and the one who hears it. But, like all ministry, that transformation takes work, personal investment, and trust.

I offer some guidelines, borne of failure as well as success in bearing bad news. Not every element applies to all situations, but taken together they offer skills and resources helpful for this ministry of delivering hard words.

BEFORE THE CONVERSATION

Pray for the person.

Image Christ sitting with you in the conversation. Ask Christ to hold the individual during the hearing of the bad news and afterwards. Don't ask Him to change the individual, or make her see the rightness of your position, or "fix" her deficiencies. Rather, simply ask the Lord to grace the person as He sees fit, and accompany both of you in the difficult journey.

Write a script.

Situations of confrontation are stressful, and can make even the most articulate of us tongue-tied, testy or timid. Take time to put on paper the points you need to make. Be specific about events, behaviors, results, and the impact on yourself or others. Try to focus on matters on which both you and the hearer can agree. Avoid anonymous accusations.

Strength in numbers.

Sometimes it's appropriate to have at least one other person present, to witness the conversation. Those who have participated in an intervention with a chemically addicted person know the value of this approach.

Don't put off the distasteful.

Most of us shy from conflict; but at our best we know that avoidance is unhealthy and infantilizing. It's better to address warning signs of problems early on. If the individual has been hearing for some while that there are problems, she is not surprised by an announcement of definitively bad news. But when we avoid issues, and keep giving good reports or fail to mention concerns lest we hurt the other's feelings, it's all the worse for everyone when we finally have to speak hard words.

Confidentiality.

Though the need for confidentiality should be obvious, in fact we need to remind ourselves, and each other, that this is a sacred responsibility. We need to address problems directly with the individual. When such problems become a source of office gossip, even if that emerges from well-intentioned concern, we've already fallen into the old traps, violated trust and undercut our attempts at ministry.

DURING THE CONVERSATION

Acknowledge that this will be painful, both to hear and to deliver.

When we admit that we are uncomfortable, and recognize that the other is also likely to be, our common vulnerability opens a way for genuine dialogue. The individual may not accept the invitation to see our pain in this dialogue, and may respond simply with defensiveness, denial and destructive retorts. But we owe him or her and the ministry our willingness to take the risk.

Don't shift blame to anyone else.

Even if you are acting on directions of a superior, don't intimate that you secretly disagree. That simply introduces deceit and personalizes the issues. Take responsibility for the decisions you are conveying. If you genuinely and conscientiously disagree, refuse the task, and if necessary resign the post.

Anticipate but don't presume.

While acknowledging the legitimacy of the hurt, anger, sorrow, despair that the person may feel, don't presume that the hearer will respond exactly as you

night. Some can hear bad news with graciousness and calm. At the same time, while being innocent as doves, be wise as serpents: sometimes the negative response will come later, and perhaps in less obvious ways. The individual may not get mad, but might get sick or depressed; he might engage in “guerilla warfare” by spreading distortions and accusations. Stay alert.

Don't adopt a “carrot and a stick” approach.

It is tempting to use bribes, trickery or ruses to mitigate the negative results or to distract the individual from the full weight of the bad news. But that is dishonest, and again falls into the old traps which negate ministry. Intimating that “it won’t be so bad; you’ll get through this” makes us enablers of the individual’s denial and avoidance strategies, which may have been the cause of the problems in the first place. Instead, strive always to be straightforward and truthful.

Remember that symbols are real.

Adverse news or decisions will affect the individual on both the practical and the symbolic levels: losing a job is economically difficult, but also impacts her self-esteem and self-worth; losing a driving license both creates transportation challenges, and renders him less able to view himself as an independent, competent adult. Pay attention to those effects.

AFTER THE CONVERSATION

Stay present to the individual.

Follow up a day or two later with a visit or note of support. Do so again after a week, and continue to do so as appropriate. This is not an attempt to take back the hard words, but rather is an expression of our willingness to remain vulnerable with the other.

Write a summary of the conversation.

Writing a summary forces us to distill the salient issues from minor matters. It helps us separate our personal feelings of anger, anxiety or frustration from the facts of the situation. When shared with the other, a written summary of the conversation provides both parties a record of decisions taken or new behaviors to which they have committed themselves. It provides a basis for clarifications, future conversations, and evaluation of the individual’s response. Finally, in some instances, the summary creates a record in the personnel file for use by a future supervisor.

Follow up a day or two later with a visit or note of support.

Continue to pray for the individual.

When we pray for the other, we are placing ourselves by the side of the other in her need, and by the side of Christ who “intercedes for us at the right hand of the Father.” That simple act of vulnerable presence is the heart of ministry.

Don't take personally the negative feedback you may receive.

In *The West Wing*, Martin Sheen’s character, President Jed Bartlett, faced a decision about allowing the execution of a federal prisoner, and he called to Washington his long-time parish priest and friend. The priest asked, “What do I call you, Jed or Mr. President?” Sheen responded that in the Oval Office he preferred Mr. President, because it allowed him to separate his personal feelings from the decisions he had to make in his official role. In the same way, we need some professional distance from the personal impact of decisions.

Have healthy support for yourself.

Have a supervisor, mentor, spiritual director, or some other competent person, with whom to share your experience of being a kak-angelist. The individual needs to be outside the situation, so that it doesn’t devolve into a gripe session or gossip, but instead is a healthy place to strategize, evaluate, and correct your approaches, and to support you.

Ethicist Bruce Weinstein reminds us of the basic guidelines for ethical behavior, standards that apply to this ministry of bearing bad news. First, Weinstein holds that the Hippocratic principle, Do No Harm, applies to our words as much as to our deeds. “We would do well to consider how what we say and do affects other people.... Don’t say something nasty if you feel like saying something nasty. It doesn’t help you and it doesn’t help anyone else.”

Next, he holds that our actions should make a positive difference. When bearing bad news, this is an important goal to hold on to: an unsafe driver will no longer be a risk to himself or others, a terminally ill person will have the opportunity to decide how to use the precious remaining weeks or months, an unhappy and ineffective employee can improve her skills or find a position better suited to her abilities.

Weinstein reminds us that ethical behavior in all areas requires us to respect others by keeping confidences, telling the truth, and fulfilling promises. Those to whom we deliver hard words need to believe that the communication has not become part of our coffee conversation or water-cooler griping; they deserve truth, and not spin, either an exaggerated depiction of their plight or a candy-coated version that downplays genuine problems. And if we offer support or assistance, we must follow through with it; if we warn of future sanctions or consequences, those must not be idle words.

In all this, we strive to be fair to all.

But, as Weinstein concludes, above all we must be loving and compassionate. Delivering bad news, as I conceive it, is a ministry and not just a duty or an obli-

gation attendant upon our particular office. If we discover some pleasure or satisfaction in delivering bad news, some *schaudenfreude* (experiencing joy at the pain of another), arising perhaps from personal antipathy or old scores, then we probably need to pass the task on to someone else. Ministry requires compassion, suffering with the person. It should cost us something.

RECOMMENDED READING

Weinstein, B. *What Should I Do? 4 Simple Steps to Making Better Decisions in Everyday Life*. New York: Perigee/Penguin, 2000.



Father Paul D. Holland, S.J., is the rector of Campion Center, a health care facility for elderly and infirm Jesuits in Weston, Massachusetts.

The Positive Effects of Racial Diversity

A study of participants in a jury pool in Michigan has produced interesting results having a bearing on the fairness of jury deliberations and, perhaps, other deliberations. Before any deliberation on a case a group of potential jurors that was all white showed more of a bias toward finding a black defendant guilty than did a group that included some black members. Not only that, but the homogeneous panel of jurors spent significantly less time in deliberation and discussed fewer case facts than did a mixed group. According to the researcher, Samuel Sommers, Ph.D., assistant professor of psychology at Tufts University, the deliberations in the diverse groups became longer not so much because of the different perspective offered by the black members, but because the presence of black members seemed to affect the quality of everyone's contributions. The study indicated that homogeneous groups, in this study at least, spent less time making decisions, made more errors and took into consideration fewer facts. The study has implications not only for juror selection but perhaps also for other settings. It is possible that homogeneity leads groups to take too much for granted rather than to look at all factors in coming to decisions. The study is reported in the April, 2006, issue of *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

A NOTE ON LEADERSHIP, IGNATIAN STYLE

William A. Barry, S.J.



The stereotype of Ignatian obedience, a group of men marching blindly to the orders of superiors, would argue that the Jesuit leadership style would have little to say to a modern audience. But the reality envisioned by Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, is very different from this picture. Along with Chris Lowney who has written a book on corporate leadership based on Jesuit principles, I believe that the style of leadership envisioned by the *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus* might be helpful to leaders today.

For Ignatius the primary aim of any human being is to find the will of God and live according to it. He wrote his *Spiritual Exercises* to provide a methodology by which people might learn to do this. In the Fall, 2006 issue of HUMAN DEVELOPMENT I tried to show that finding the will of God means attuning one's actions with God's action which is the world. In order to attune their own actions with God's action those who make the *Exercises* pay attention to their experience in prayer and life and reverence this experience, i.e., take it as it is as a possible sign of God's presence. Then they try to discern what in this experience is of God, what not. In order to do this discernment with less fear of fooling themselves, they speak

with someone whom they can trust about their experience. The ones trusted (spiritual directors) need to listen with the same kind of attention and reverence to the experience of those who come to them and then help them to discern what is of God, what not. This process of "direction" is one of mutuality; both parties are affected by the conversation.

I can attest to this mutuality from my own experience as a director of the *Exercises*. I have found my own image of God and my own way of living as a Christian challenged by what I have heard when directing others. It can be profoundly disturbing to direct another in the *Exercises* in the manner envisaged by Ignatius because God is not predictable or constrained by any human expectation. It is this model of mutuality from the *Exercises* that suffuses the way Ignatius speaks of leadership in the *Constitutions*, a model that can help leaders in the church today.

GOD'S STAKE IN HUMAN INSTITUTIONS

Any human institution or organization is a flawed and imperfect instrument for fostering God's dream. In addition, all the individuals in the organization, including the leaders, are flawed, sinful and limited. Hence it is no easy task for leaders to make decisions about the individuals and the organizations of which they have charge. How do they, themselves limited and sinful, lead other sinful and limited people in an organization that is a flawed instrument of God's dream? For one thing, they must have faith and trust that God wants this organization to exist and to function more in tune with God's dream than not, and that God, therefore, has a stake in how the organization and all its members function. The *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus* begins with this statement: "Although God our Creator and Lord is the one who in his Supreme Wisdom and Goodness must preserve, direct, and carry forward in his divine service this least Society of Jesus, just as he deigned to begin it..." (n. 134). The last part of the *Constitutions* begins in a similar way: "The Society of Jesus was not instituted by human means, and it is not through them that it can be preserved and increased, but through the grace of the omnipotent hand of Christ our God and Lord" (n. 812). Jesuits are asked to believe that God wants the Society of Jesus to exist in the Roman Catholic Church for the "good of souls." Such a belief is energizing, moving leaders and those led to do everything in their power to attune what they

do with God's purposes in bringing this organization into existence. Belief in the mission of an organization is greatly enhanced if those involved see the organization as an instrument of God.

GOD'S STAKE IN THE CHOICE OF LEADERS

In addition, Jesuits who are appointed to be superiors are asked to trust that God has a stake in their own leadership of the organizations entrusted to them. This kind of trust need not lead them to blind faith in their own decision-making ability, but can give them the kind of self-confidence that is necessary in leaders. The process of the choice of superiors in the Society of Jesus requires wide consultation of members and others and frank conversations with the potential leaders about the strengths and liabilities of these potential leaders. In the ideal, at least, all those consulted and those making the final decision about the appointment want to find leaders who are trying to be in tune with God's dream, who know themselves and who are not afraid to make the sometimes difficult decisions and confrontations that are needed for the good of the institution. Thus, even the process of appointing superiors is, in the ideal, a process of discernment of God's will. Those who are appointed can, then, trust that God has a stake in their becoming leaders and in how they lead the organizations entrusted to them. The keyword here is "entrusted to them." The organization is God's work, not the leader's.

LEADERSHIP REQUIRES MUTUALITY

Ignatian governance presumes that leaders will have enough self-confidence to know their own strengths and limitations and be able to listen to others, even when these others may present ideas and insights that run counter to their own. It also presumes that they will be the kind of men other Jesuits can trust to tell the truth about themselves and about how they see things. Jesuit leadership, in spite of the stereotype of blind obedience, presumes some kind of mutuality between superiors and those they lead. This mutuality is analogous to the mutuality that develops between the one who gives the *Spiritual Exercises* and the one who makes them. I want to develop this idea of mutuality as a hallmark of leadership that might be very helpful in any organization, especially any religiously oriented organization.

A careful reading of the Jesuit *Constitutions* reveals that the relationship between superiors and those they lead has to be one of mutuality and trust. Of the novice director, for example, Ignatius says that he should be a person whom all those in probation (novitiate) may love and to whom they may have recourse in their temptations and open themselves with confidence hoping to receive from him in our Lord counsel and aid in "everything" (n. 263). This description of the novice director fits what Ignatius desires in any superior in the society of Jesus. Neither novices nor older Jesuits will actually love and trust a superior who is not trustworthy and who does not show at least some affection for them. Ignatian obedience, like any Christian obedience, only works if there is mutual trust between the superior and the Jesuits whom he leads. Such trust has to be based on some minimum of affection between the leaders and the led. Hence, Ignatius writes that the novice director should be the kind of man the novices can love; he presumes that the novice director loves the novices.

In practice this means that when a superior listens to a Jesuit in his community or institution, he has to listen to what the man says with same kind of attention and reverence needed in a director of the *Spiritual Exercises*, expecting that in this conversation both of them will learn something about God's ways. To listen with attention and reverence the superior needs to trust the other to tell the truth about himself and about what he knows with regard to the institution, as best he can. If the superior has doubts about a man's trustworthiness, he needs to bring up his doubts in direct conversation with the man as honestly and gently as he can. Without trust Jesuit governance will not work.

Actually no Christian enterprise, as Christian, will work as God intends it to work without trust. God does not want slavish obedience to external demands, but free friends who will join in the common enterprise that is God's kingdom. Any Christian enterprise must be built on mutual trust to work as God wants it to work. If you and I cannot trust one another, how can we engage wholeheartedly together in any work, let alone in a work that bears the name Christian? We will always be watching our backs, trying to protect ourselves from being taken advantage of. We are not brothers and sisters working together to discover how best to serve God's people. I may be mistaken in my trust in you, but I will never find out whether I can trust you if I do not give trust a try. How leaders deal

with failure in trustworthiness is a matter they need to learn. Nevertheless, the first thing we take from this reflection on Ignatian leadership is that such leadership is based on mutual trust. But Ignatius is not innovator here; this is just basic Christian spirituality.

MUTUALITY MEANS OPENNESS ON BOTH SIDES

Secondly, Jesuit superiors must listen to other Jesuits with an open mind. They must honestly expect, perhaps even hope, to be surprised by the conversation. Of course, the other Jesuits also need to listen to superiors with attention and reverence. It is a mutual conversation. This is part of the mutual vulnerability of any genuine conversation that searches for the best way to serve God. Just as directors of the *Spiritual Exercises* need to listen with attention and reverence and to expect surprises (because God is sovereign freedom whose responses can never be predicted, even by the structure of the *Spiritual Exercises*), so too Jesuit superiors must listen with openness and expectation to their fellow Jesuits and others who are also engaged in the enterprise or organization. The conversation may be about an assignment for this Jesuit, or it may be about some direction the superior is considering with regard to the organization. Of course, superiors go into such conversations with hopes for the outcome of the conversation; e.g., "I want this Jesuit to become the principal of the school;" "I hope to enlist this person to help me to move the school in a new direction." But they also have to be open to be surprised, to find their own expectations and hopes dashed or modified by the conversation.

Ignatius presumes that God communicates to everyone, that God is always moving individuals to live in tune with God's dream for them and the world. If this is true, then in any organization that wants to be in tune with God's dream everyone who accepts the mission has the obligation to listen to how God wants this organization to work. The leader is not the only pipeline to God. Jesuit governance presumes that God is present in any conversation, and, therefore, that both parties may be surprised by what happens as a result of the interchange. So superiors may go into the conversation expecting one outcome, but this expectation should not hinder them from listening with attention and reverence even when what they hear runs counter to what they had expected. It is not easy to do this; hence, before any such conversation they need to pray for such openness, the openness to be surprised by God.

SOME CORROLARIES

These points derived from Ignatian governance depend on the assumption mentioned earlier, namely that God has a stake in the decisions made by members and leaders of organizations. God wants a world in which men and women work together in relative harmony as friends of God and of one another and of the planet that sustains us. Granted the truth of this assumption, how we decide is important to God and to God's hopes and dreams. Once God creates a world in which human beings exist, God becomes vulnerable to us. God cannot achieve the dream without our cooperation. Individuals and institutions out of tune with God's dream make the dream's achievement difficult. Hence, the kind of leadership human beings exercise in this world is either part of the solution or part of the problem. Leaders need to do all in their power to make decisions more in tune with God's dream than not.

Given this assumption, leaders have as one of their most important tasks to help everyone working in the organization to accept the mission and to realize that an atmosphere of mutuality and trust is essential to its functioning as God intends. They help by the way they interact with those they lead and by the kind of subordinates they put in positions of authority in the organization, if it is large enough to need subordinate authority. They also demonstrate the ethos of trust by delegating to others and letting them do their jobs without interference. Accountability is necessary, but not interference. The more leaders trust those in intermediate authority, the more these others will trust those under their supervision. But, somehow or other, what needs to be communicated regularly and often is that all of us are in this together in cooperation with God. Ignatius often wrote that Jesuits were working in the "vineyard of the Lord." He believed that God is working at all times to bring about God's dream for the world. So the world is God's vineyard, God's garden, which he wants us to help tend together.

Finally, Ignatian governance depends on the ingenuity and enterprise of the men in the field. Ignatius wanted Jesuits to be men who could be trusted to see what needed doing and to do it without having to check everything out with superiors. Given the unreliability of communication when the Society of Jesus was

founded, it may seem the only thing he could have done when he sent men to South America or to India. But there is more to it than necessity. Ignatius stressed obedience, but he also hoped that Jesuits would be men of talent and discernment who could be trusted to discover how God was acting in very different cultures and to act on their best insights. Ignatius might give instructions, even detailed instructions, to those going on a mission to Ireland or India, but he would always add that they had to adjust their procedures according to what they discovered on the ground. In other words, he trusted that they were men of prayer, discernment and prudence who could make decisions based on conditions discovered in new territories. If God is always acting in this world, then, Ignatius seems to have reasoned, Jesuits need to be given the freedom and trust to discover on their own how God is acting. There is no way to understand the remarkable achievements of Jesuits scattered throughout the world except by realizing that the Jesuit way of proceeding required that they be trusted to discern God's activity without waiting for orders from headquarters.

Chris Lowney, a former Jesuit who became a successful manager in the J. P. Morgan Company, wrote *Heroic Leadership* as an alternative to many of the leadership manuals in use in business schools across the United States. In it he makes the point that the Jesuits wanted all their members to be leaders, men of vision, talent and ingenuity who loved and trusted one another. When this vision works great things happen, and even the failures are magnificent. Naturally enough, given the human limitations and sinfulness of Jesuits, the vision has not always been implemented in the Jesuit order itself. Ideals are never fully realized in any human institution. But without ideals individuals and institutions act much more blindly and destructively than they would with them. Ideals remind us of what we and our institutions are meant to be and help us to seek the continual conversion required to be the human beings God wants us to be.

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Lowney, C. *Heroic Leadership: Best Practices from a 450-year-old Company that Changed the World*. Chicago: Loyola Press, 2003.